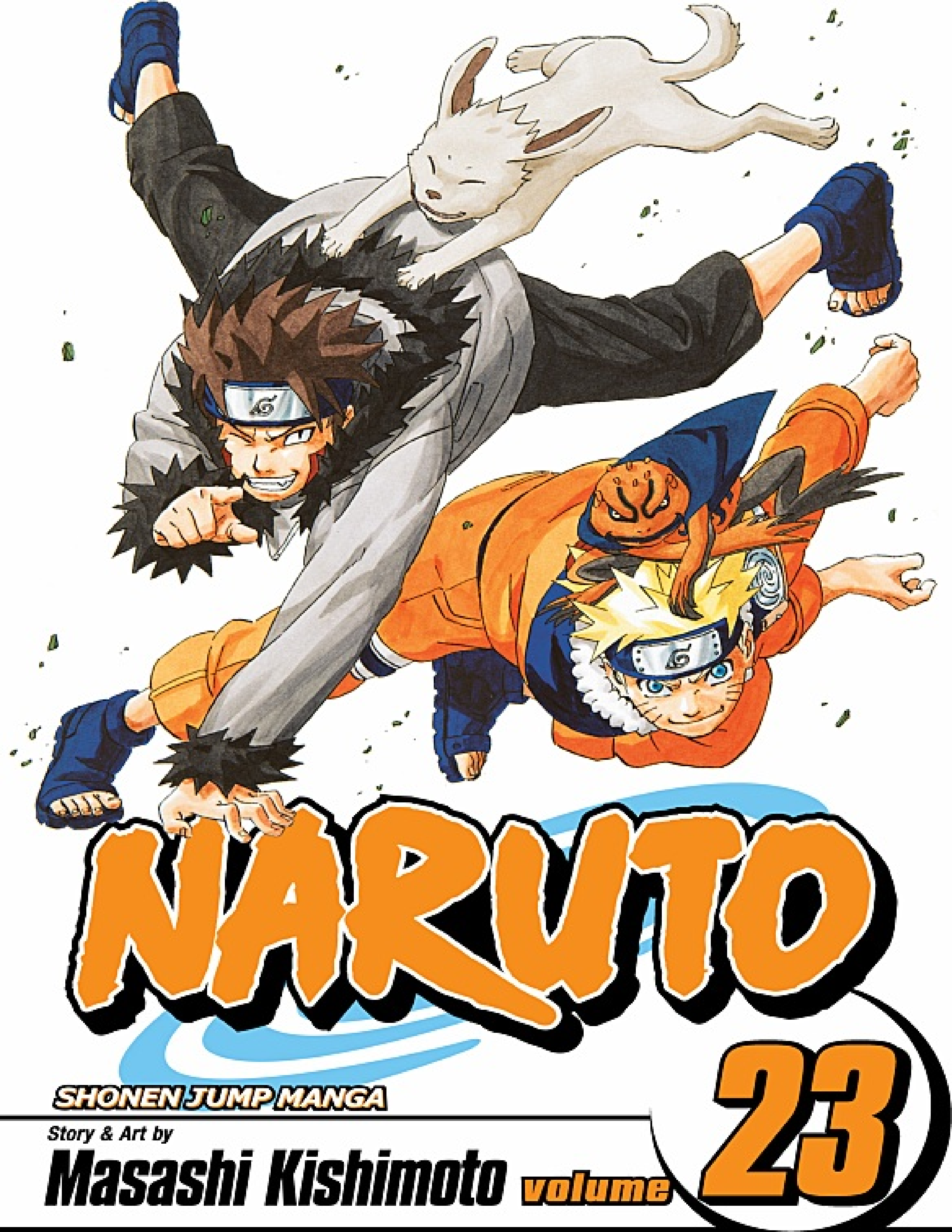
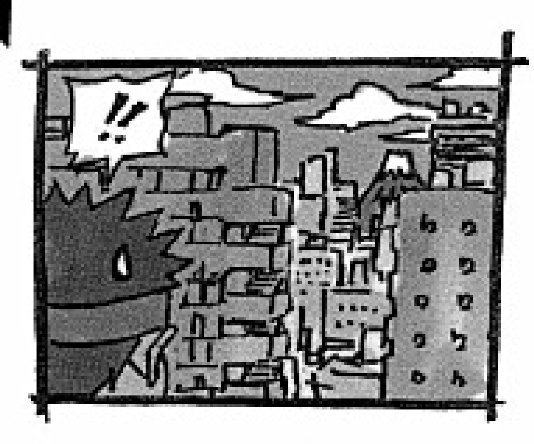

NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume
23



岸本斉史

It's been a year since I moved into my current apartment and I just recently realized something... I can see Mt. Fuji from my porch. It took me this long to notice!

—Masashi Kishimoto, 2004

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

NARUTO VOL. 23
The SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

Translation/Kyoko Shapiro, HC Language Solutions, Inc.
English Adaptation/Ian Reid, HC Language Solutions, Inc.
Touch-up Art & Lettering/Gia Cam Luc
Design/Yvonne Cai
Editor/Joel Enos

Editor in Chief, Books/Alvin Lu
Editor in Chief, Magazines/Marc Weidenbaum
VP of Publishing Licensing/Rika Inouye
VP of Sales/Gonzalo Ferreyra
Sr. VP of Marketing/Liza Coppola
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

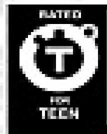
 A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2
First printing, November 2007
Second printing, November 2007

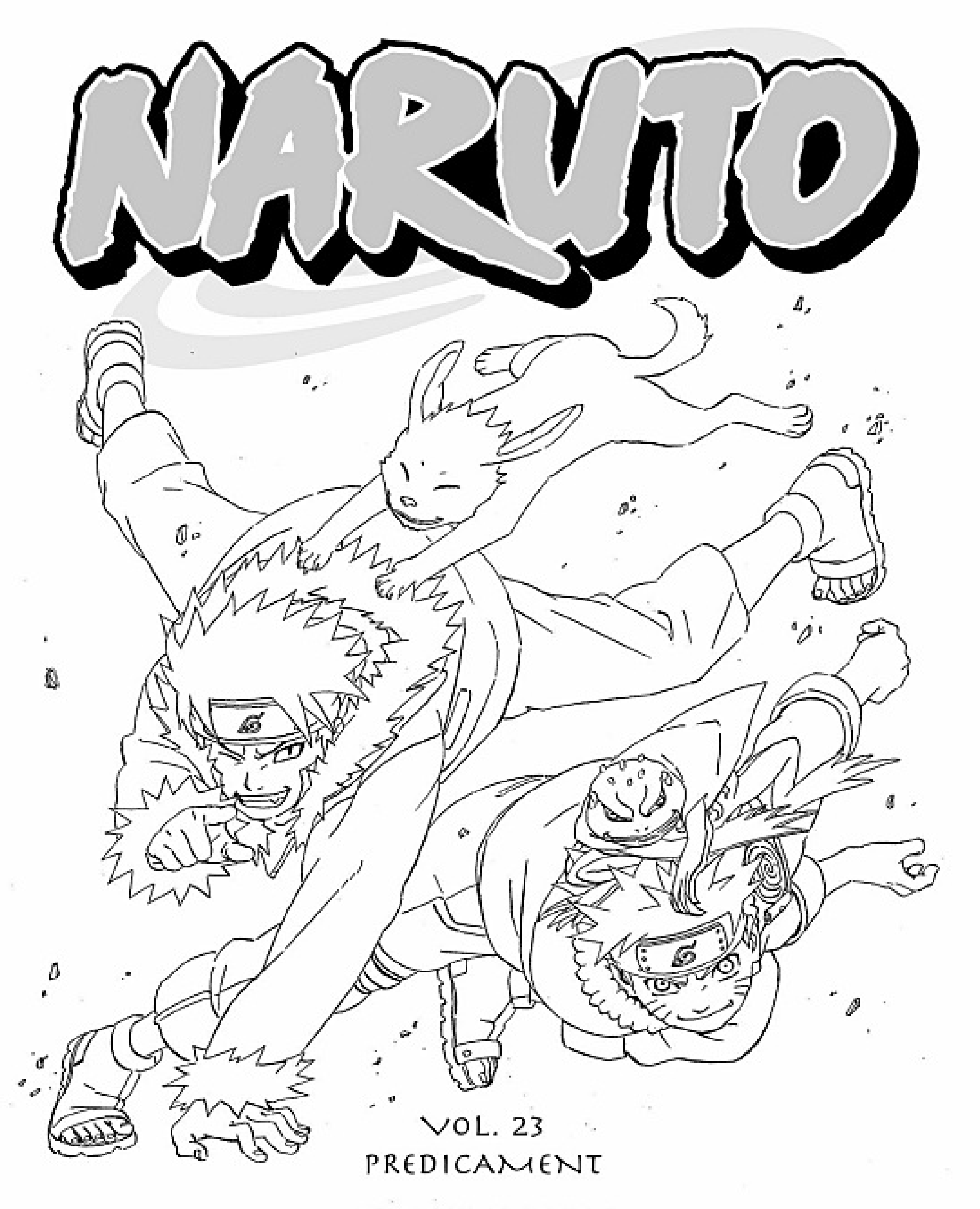




PARENTAL ADVISORY
NARUTO is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains realistic and fantasy violence.
ratings.viz.com



SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION



NARUTO

VOL. 23

PREDICAMENT

STORY AND ART BY

MASASHI KISHIMOTO













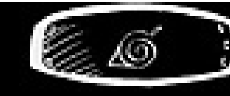


Twelve years ago a destructive nine-tailed fox spirit attacked the ninja village of Konohagakure. The *Hokage*, or village champion, defeated the fox by sealing its soul into the body of a baby boy. Now that boy, Uzumaki Naruto, has grown up to be a ninja-in-training, learning the art of ninjutsu with his cellmates Sakura and Sasuke.

Naruto and company take on the Chûnin Selection Exams but suffer a sudden attack from Orochimaru in the Forest of Death. Orochimaru leaves a curse mark on Sasuke's body and vanishes, only to return during the final round to launch *Operation Destroy Konoha!* While Naruto battles Gaara, the Third Hokage falls to Orochimaru.

After the funeral, the mysterious Tsunade becomes Fifth Hokage. Sasuke flees Konohagakure with the Sound Ninja Four. Shikamaru and a cell hurry to pursue Sasuke, but Choji and then Neji are struck down by the Sound Ninja. Can Sasuke be saved from himself?!


CHARACTERS
Sasuke
サスケ
Naruto
ナルト
Sakura
サクラ
Shikamaru
シカマル
Chòji
秋道チョウジ
犬塚キバ&赤丸
Kiba & Akamaru
日向ネジ
Neji
The Sound Ninja Four
左近
Sakon
次郎坊
Jirobo
多由也
Tayuya
鬼童丸
Kidomaru



NARUTO

VOL. 23
PREDICAMENT

CONTENTS



NUMBER 200: ACCORDING TO PLAN...!!	7
NUMBER 201: MISCALCULATION...!!	27
NUMBER 202: THREE WISHES!!	47
NUMBER 203: SAKON'S SECRET	67
NUMBER 204: UKON'S PROWESS	87
NUMBER 205: KIBA'S DECISION!!	107
NUMBER 206: PREDICAMENT...!!	127
NUMBER 207: DEADLOCKED	147
NUMBER 208: FAKE-OUT!!	167


Number 200: According to Plan...!!


DOESN'T WASTE ANY TIME, DOES HE?!
SHF
TAK
ZWIP
FWIP


READ THIS WAY
EAT THIS...
FOOSH
TARENKEN! MULTIPLE FISTS BARRAGE!!
SHOOM
FWUU
FWUU
FWUU
FAP
FAP
FAP
FAP
FAP
FAP
FAP


WHREEEEEE
!!
THAT'S CHAKRA IN HIS HAND...
SKREEEE
!!



SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGER TRANSFOR-MATION...?

RASEN-GAN! SPIRAL CHAKRA SPHERE!!

GRAP

WHAT? MY HAND ...!

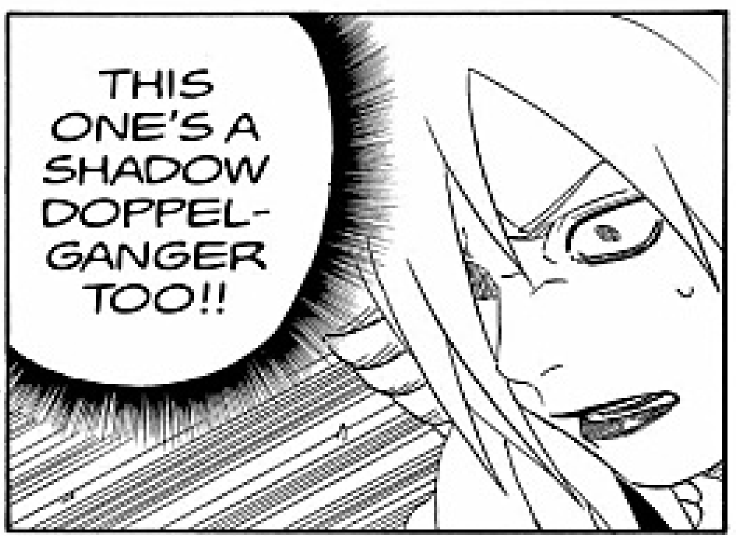




TSUUGA! TUNNELING FANG!!

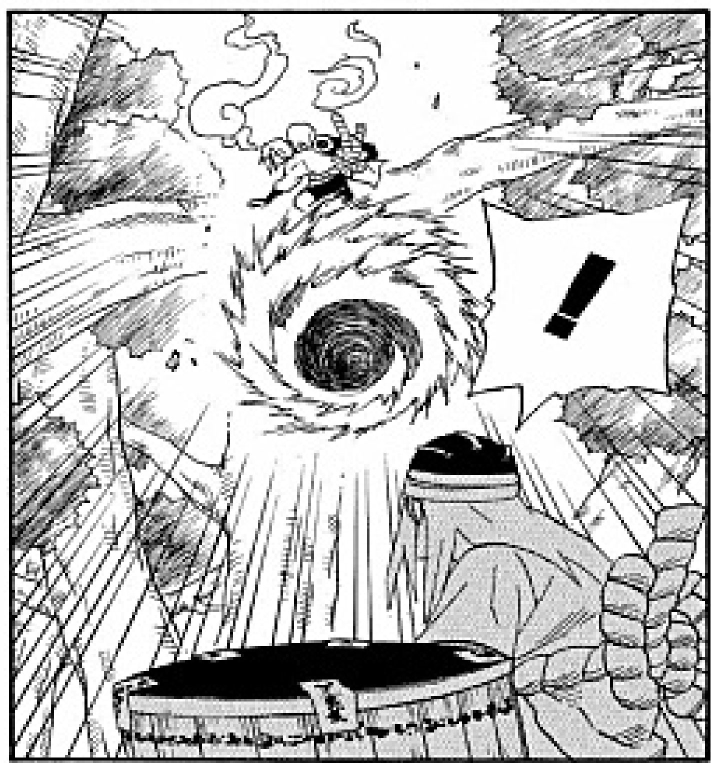
BOOF!!



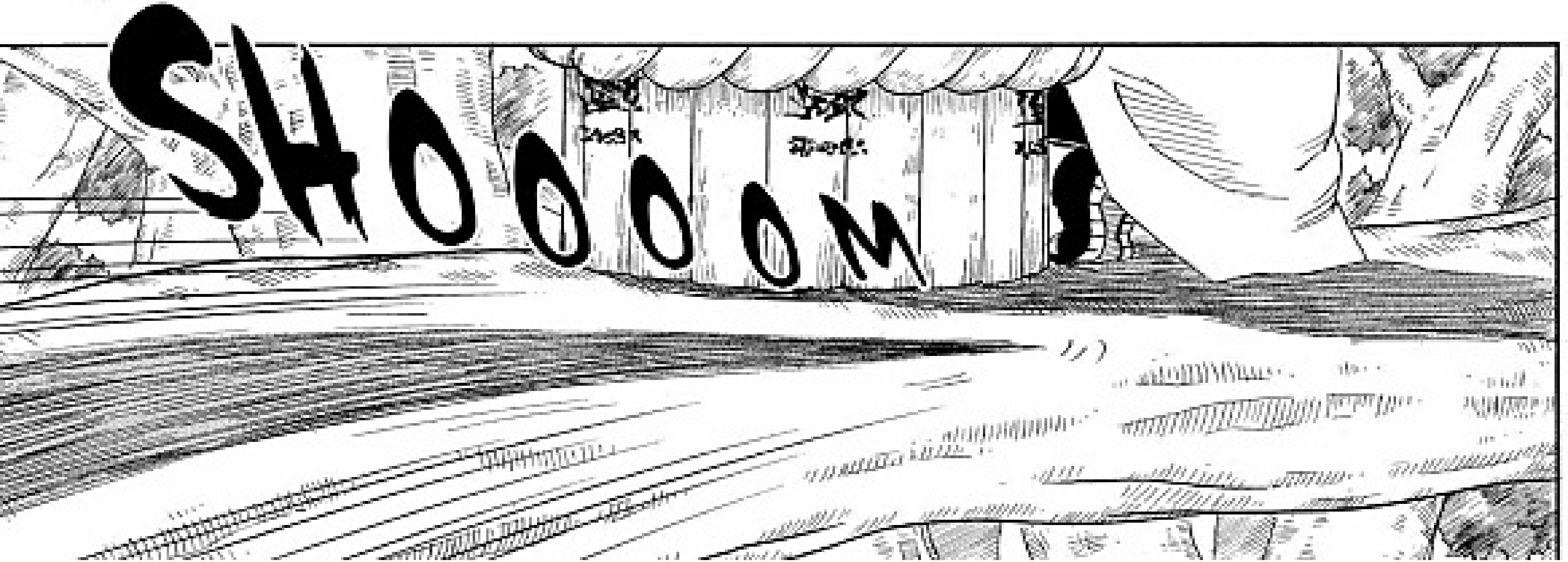



WHIRRRRK
SHF


SSH
BY LURING SAKON AND ME INTO ALIGN- MENT...
THEY WERE AIMING FOR ME FROM THE START!


!


TAK
YOU THINK IT'S THAT EASY?!


SHOOOOM

GACK
?!
UNNG


A DIVERSION...
NO... HE GOT ME.


HERE IT COMES!


KAGEMANE NO JUTSU! SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE!! SUCCESS!


WOOSH
?!


WHEEEEE EEEEE


THAP
!!
TAYUYA, QUIT DAY-DREAMING!
FWAP
I'M NOT ...!
CLUNK
NO... I CAN'T DODGE.
WATCH OUT!
SHWIP
OOF!!
THOK

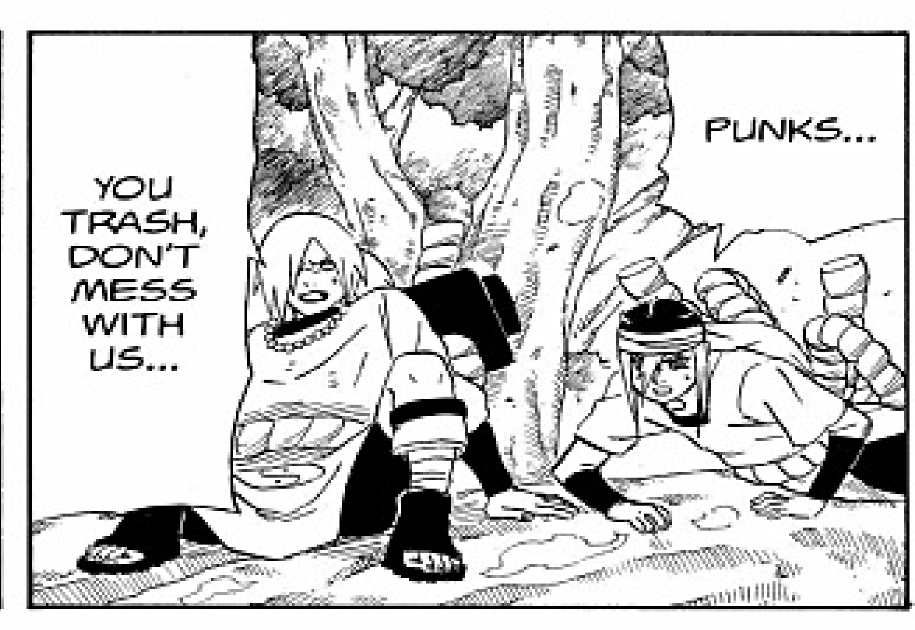

CATCH!
SHWOO


SIGH...
SLOPPY AS ALWAYS.
TOO MUCH INDIVIDUAL SKILL CAN BE A LIABILITY TOO.

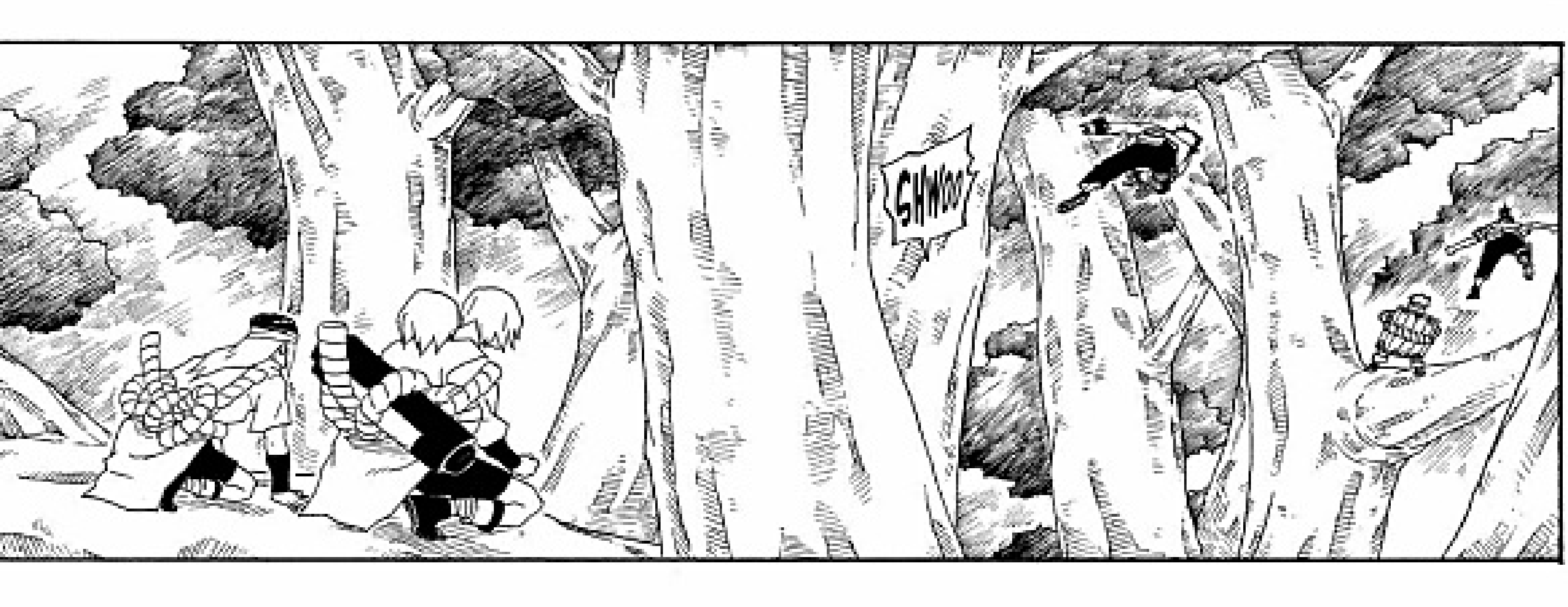

NICE JOB!
WHAK
KIBA! SHIKA-MARU!!


JUST AS PLANNED!!
WE'RE AT LEAST A STEP AHEAD OF THEM.


READ THIS WAY


PUNKS...
YOU TRASH, DON'T MESS WITH US...


NARUTO, SHIKA-MARU.
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!


SHWOO


TAK


...
SSH


...
TAK TAK

YOU WON'T GET AWAY!!

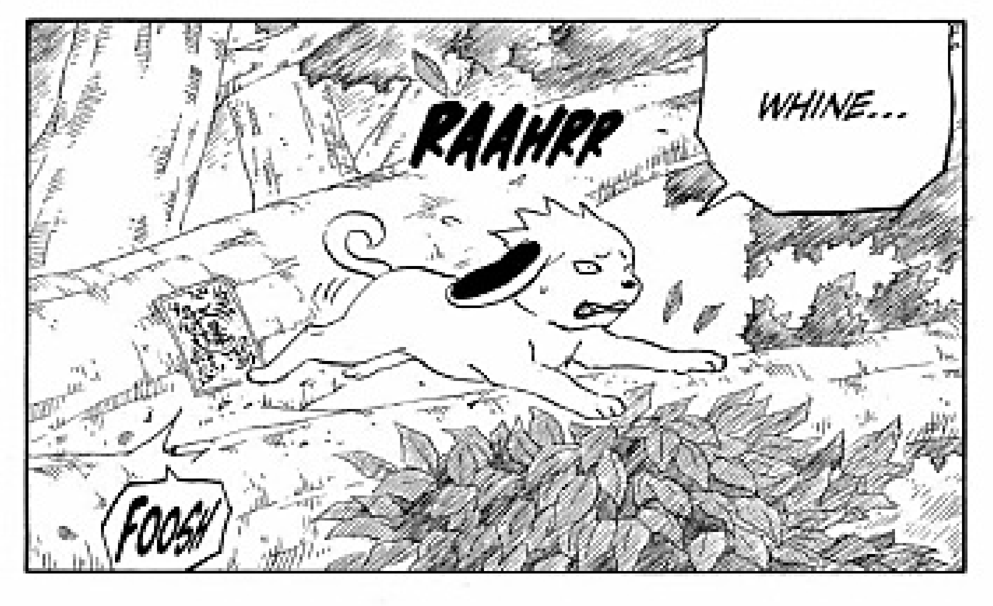
FFMM

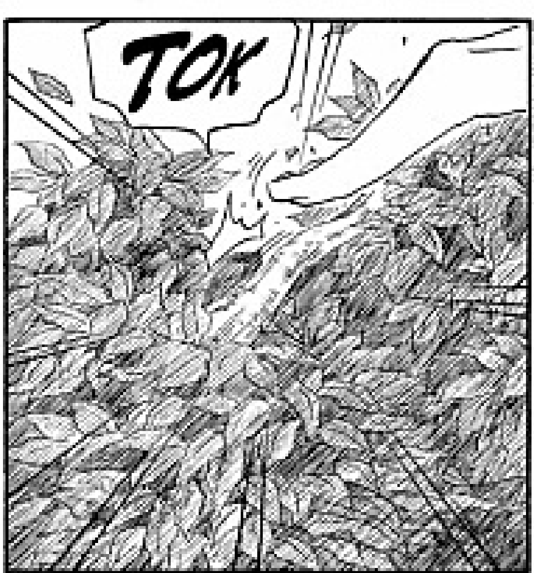




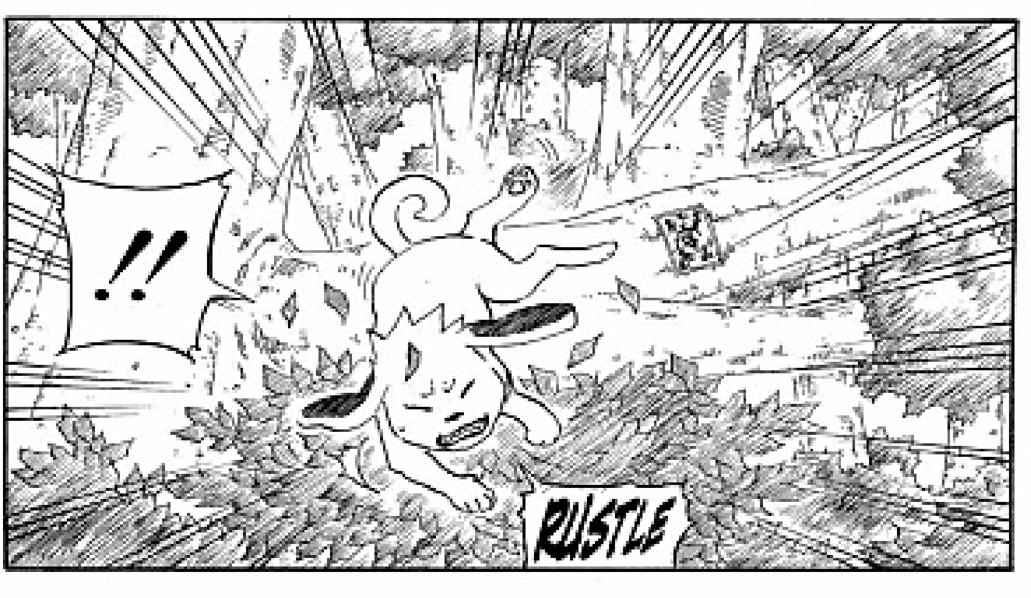
AKA-
MARU!!
WOOF!!
HURRY
BACK AS
SOON AS
IT'S SET!
!
!
GRRRR

DON'T "WOOF" ME, MUTT!!







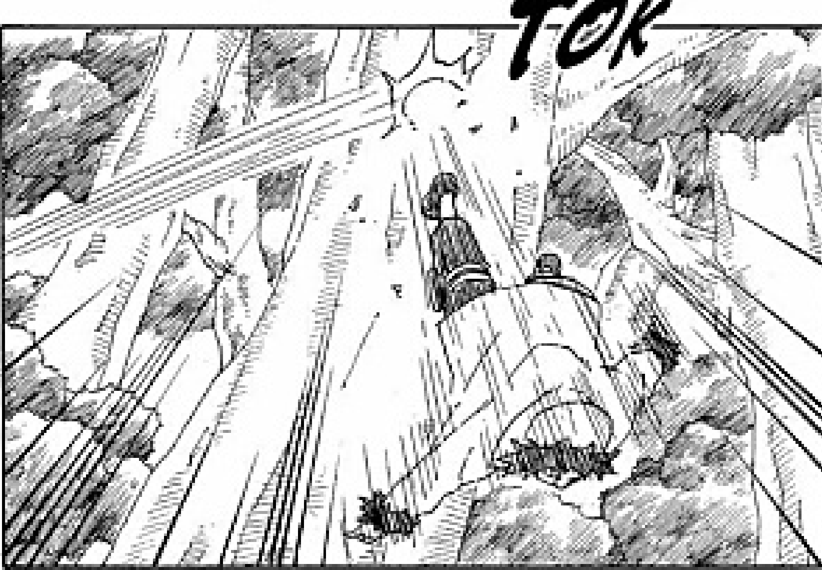



READ THIS WAY


WHIMPER...






TOK




WHIMPER...



BLAM

BOOF

NGH...

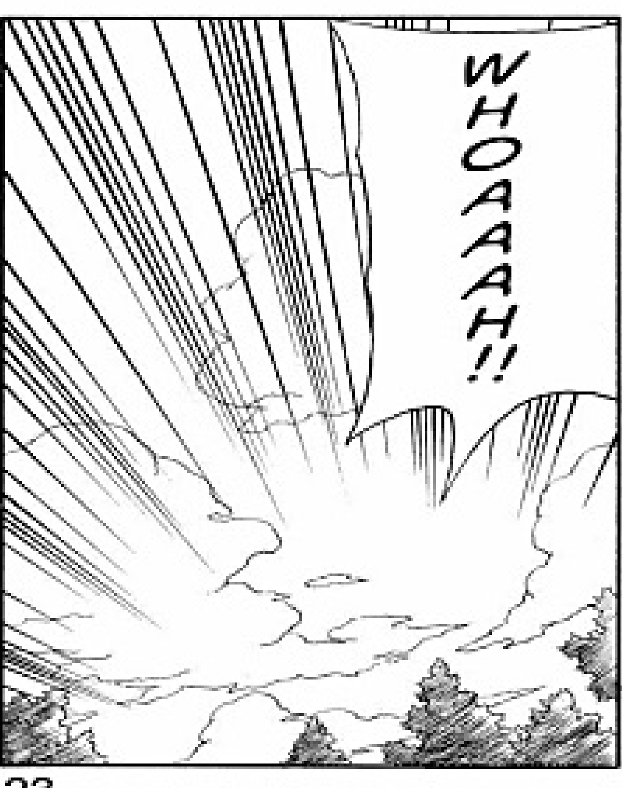





READ THIS WAY


TSK...


...NO...


WHOAAAAH!!


NO WAY! WHAT'S WITH THEM?!
HERE COMES THE OTHER ONE!!


PUNKS!!
POSH


NARUTO, YOU GO AHEAD WITH THE COFFIN!
OH, MAN... I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.



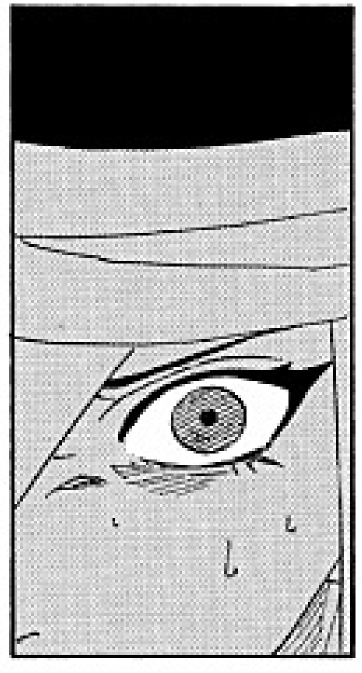

!


JUST GO!


SHIKA-MARU ...
...









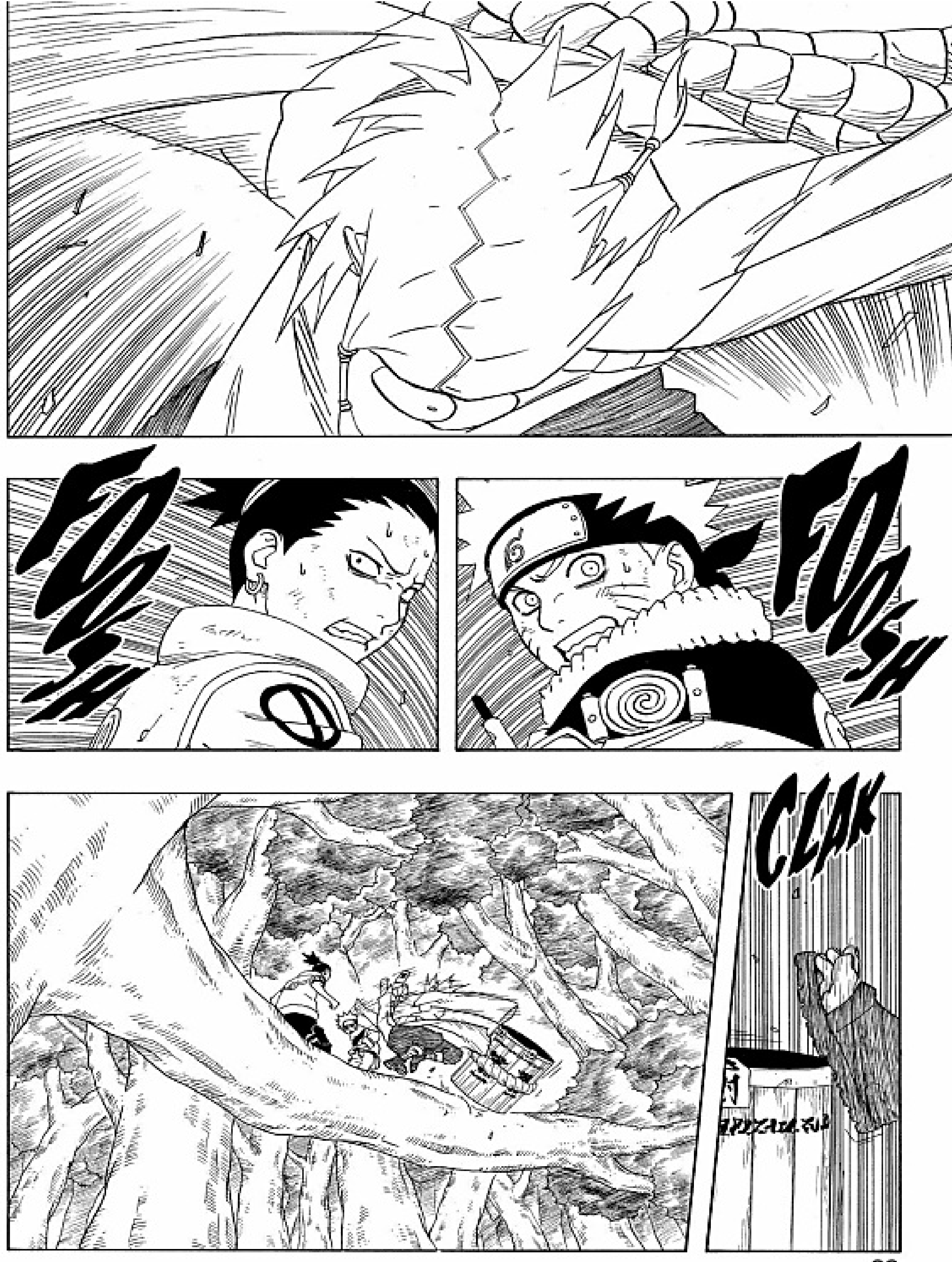


KIMIMARO.

?!


NARUTO
TM


Number 201: Miscalculation...!!


FOOSH
FOOSH
CLAK


PAP


TOK

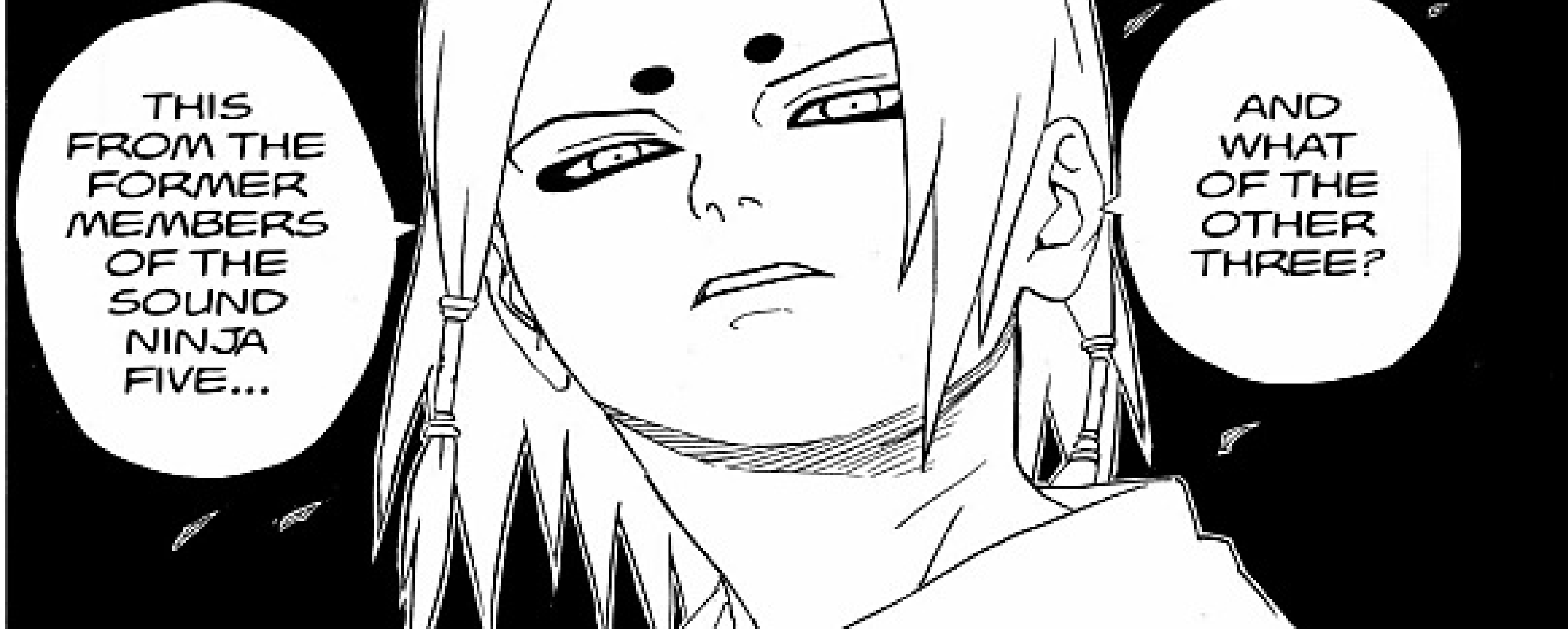
WHOA!
SHIF
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WHAT?!
TAK


?!

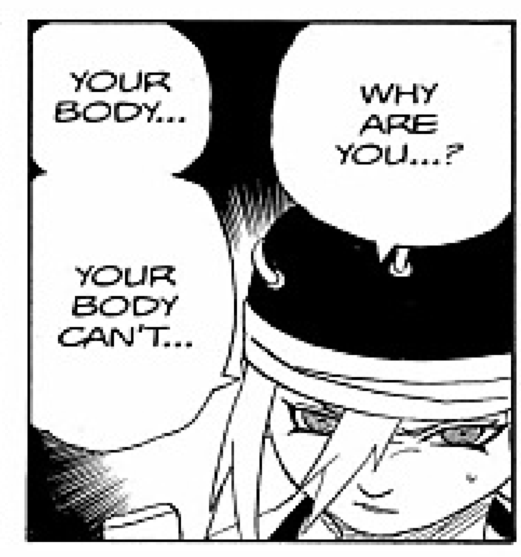

...SORRY... NARUTO.
I MISCAL-CULATED ...

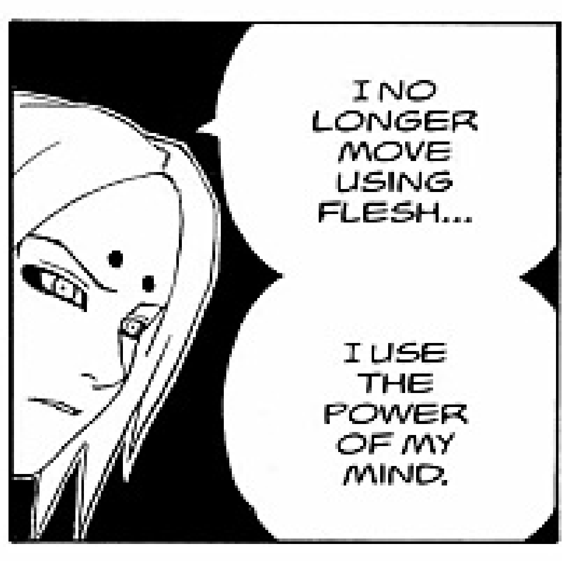

...

YOU'RE LATE... TAYUYA.



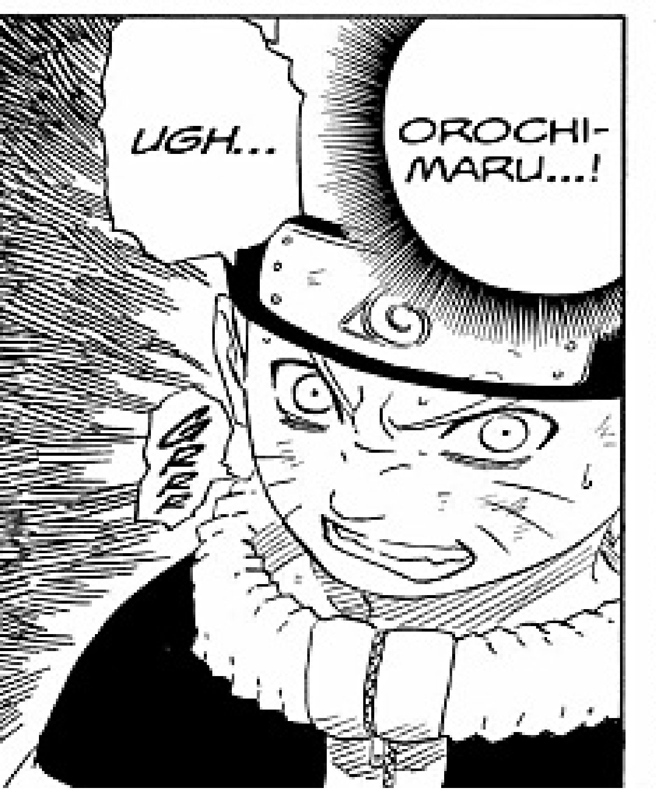

?!
...


WHY ARE YOU...?
YOUR BODY...
YOUR BODY CAN'T...


I NO LONGER MOVE USING FLESH...
I USE THE POWER OF MY MIND.

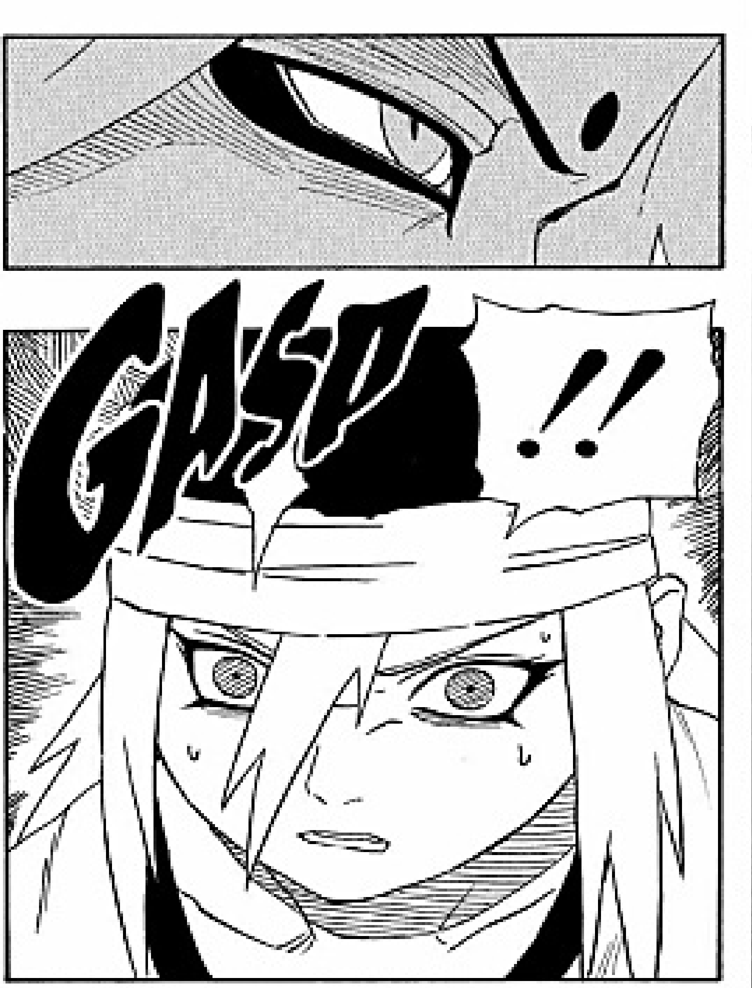

HMPH.
CAN'T YOU EVEN DIE...?


I CAN FEEL IT A LITTLE NOW...
I FEEL RELEASE FROM THE PRISON OF THE FLESH...
...AS IF I CAN TOUCH JUST A SMALL PART OF LORD OROCHIMARU'S DREAM.

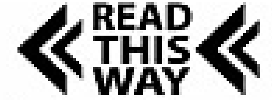

OROCHI-MARU...!
UGH...

THIS IS THE DREAM VESSEL...

BUT YOU ALL WERE TOO LATE...

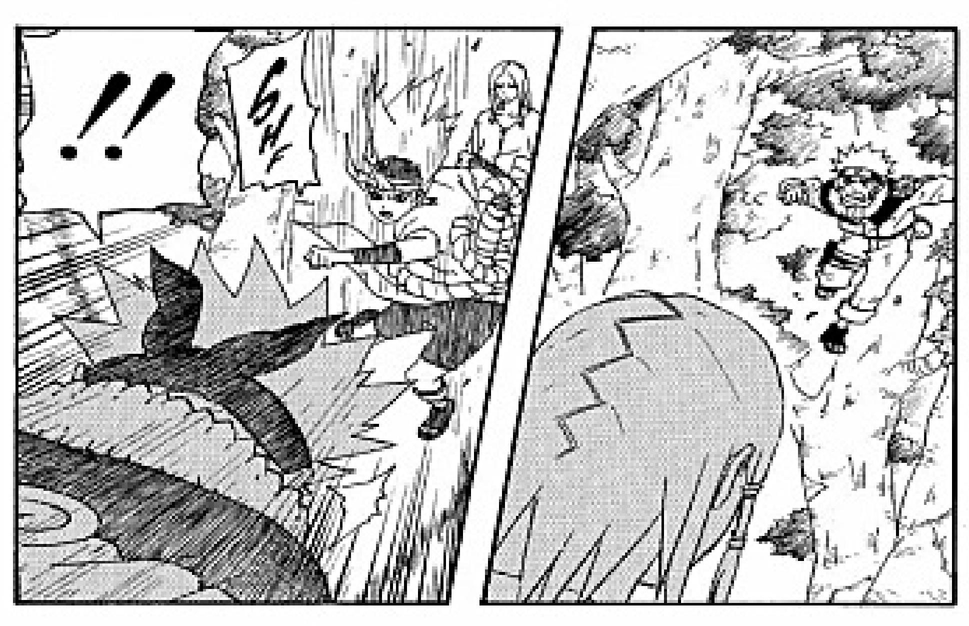


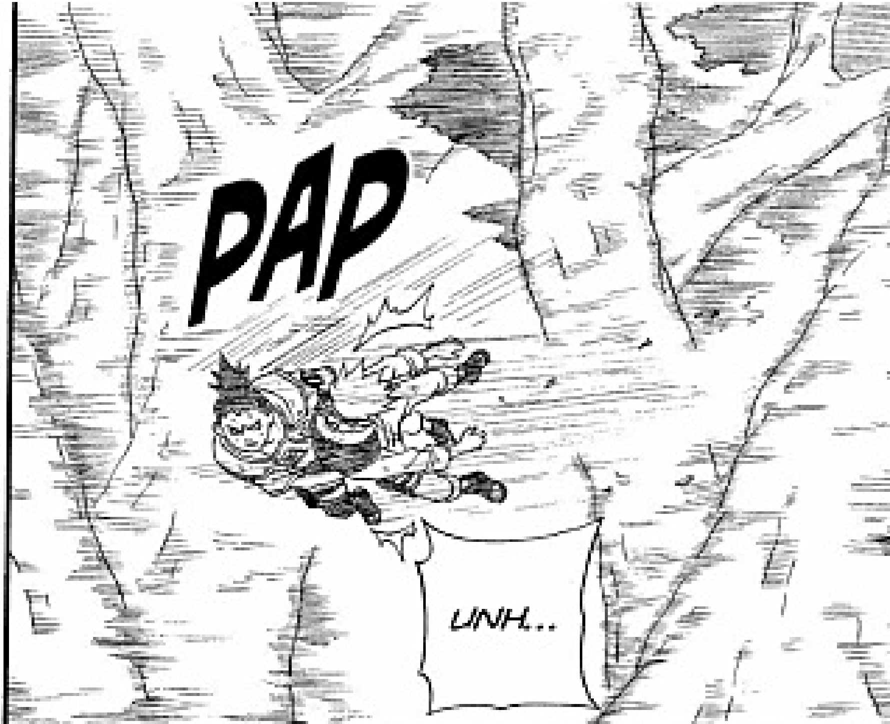



READ THIS WAY


HEY! I DON'T UNDER-STAND A WORD YOU'RE SAYING!
SH
FOO
GIVE SASUKE BACK!!


!!
HEY, NARUTO ...
WAIT!!

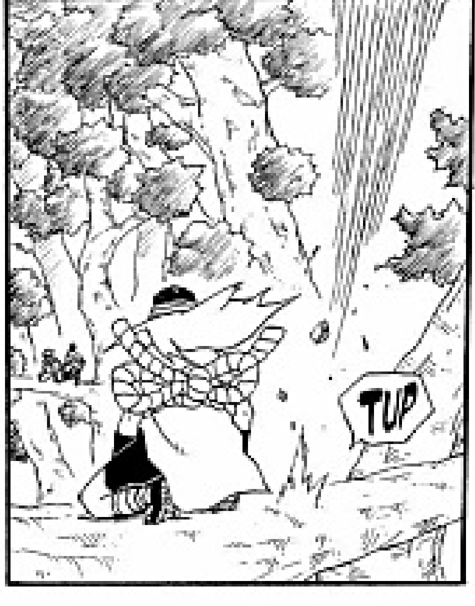

SH
!!

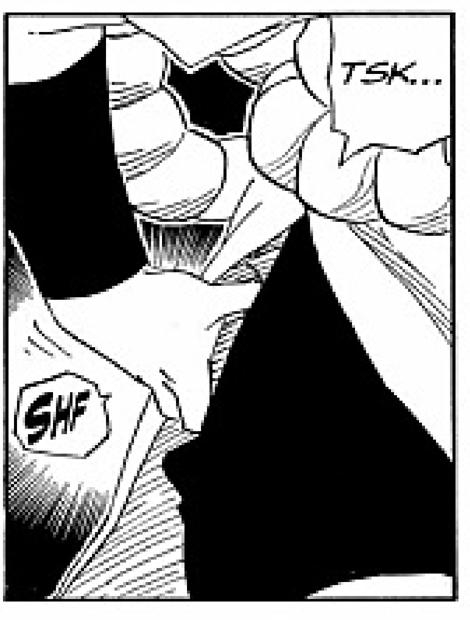

PAP
UNH...


TAYUYA...
SHWOO
TMP
TSK...


SHF
I WON'T KILL YOU...
...SO YOU CAN LIVE TO FULFILL YOUR MISSION.
!!

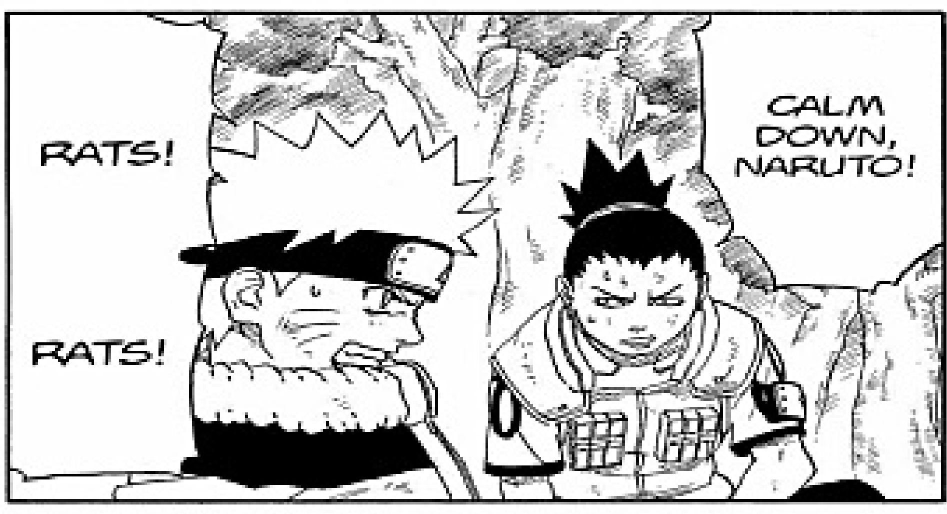

I'LL LEAVE THESE TWO PESTS TO YOU.

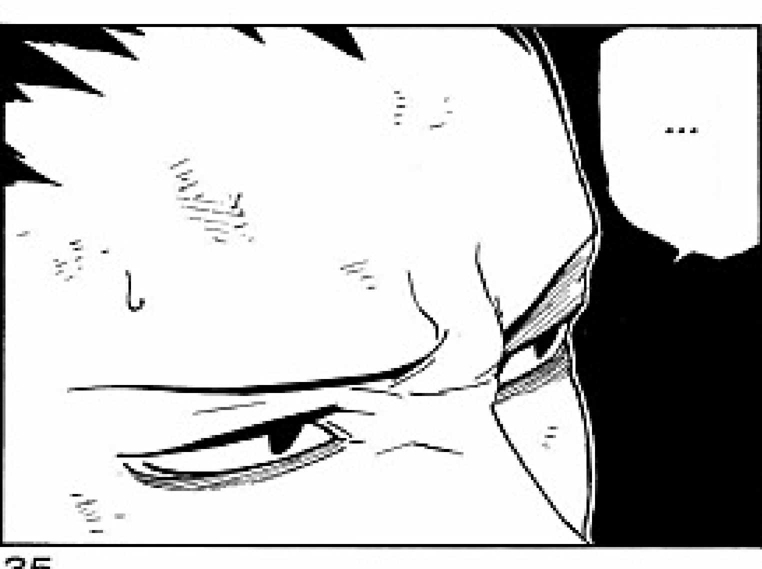

TUP


TSK...
SHF

FWIP


WE MUST BRING SASUKE BACK TO KONOHA.
...


RATS!
RATS!
CALM DOWN, NARUTO!


...


I JUST CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW.


NARUTO!
DO AS I SAY!
!


THAT'S IT! TIME TO FINISH THIS!


HMPH... HE'S A TYPICAL SHORT-RANGE IDIOT ONLY GOOD AT SHADOW DOPPELGANGERS.
AND HE'S A MID-RANGE TYPE WHO TIES ENEMIES UP WITH HIS SHADOW ARTS... AND A SHARP-MINDED LEADER...


GOT IT...?
YEAH ...!


BRING IT, PUNKS.

ALRIGHT!!
FOOSH
LET'S GO, NARUTO!!
IT'S TWO ON ONE!!
WE CAN TAKE HER!

COME ON!!
YOU SHOULDN'T UNDER-ESTIMATE US!!
CHARGE!!
HMPH! IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY OF YOU THERE ARE.





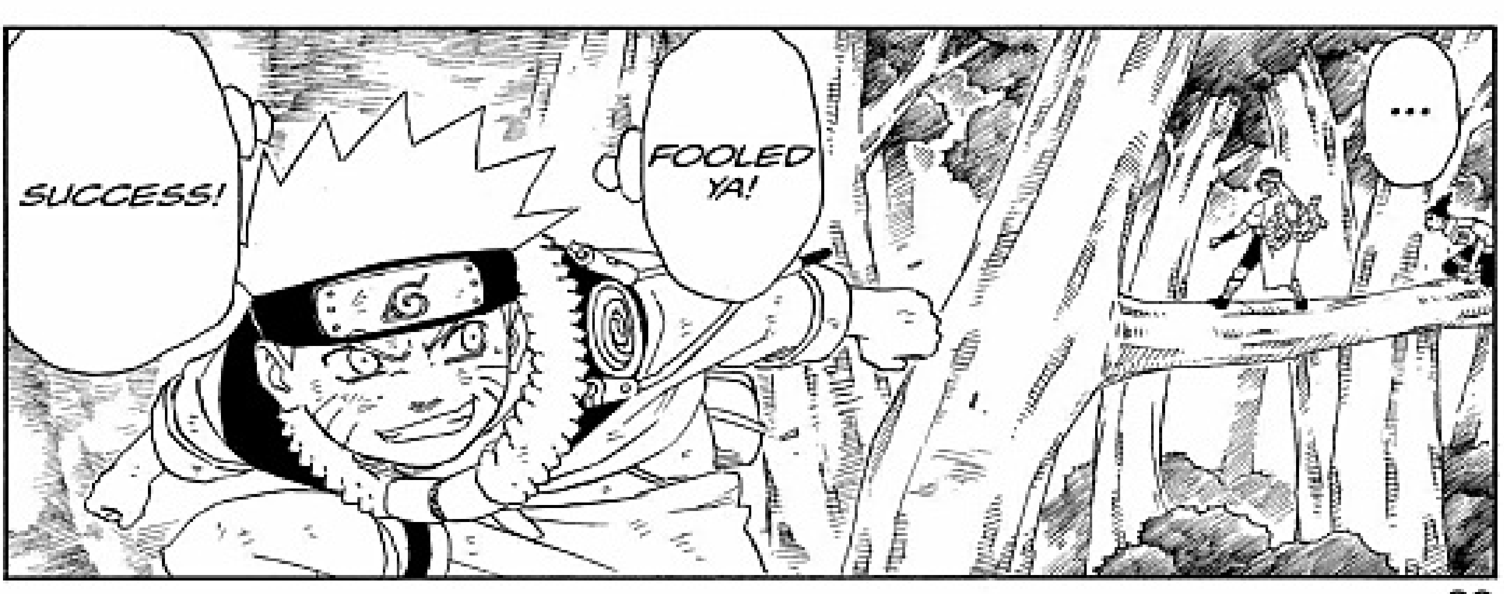
YOU'RE OVER!













WHAT?! YOU TRICKED ME!

TEAM-WORK? THIS IS CHEATING!

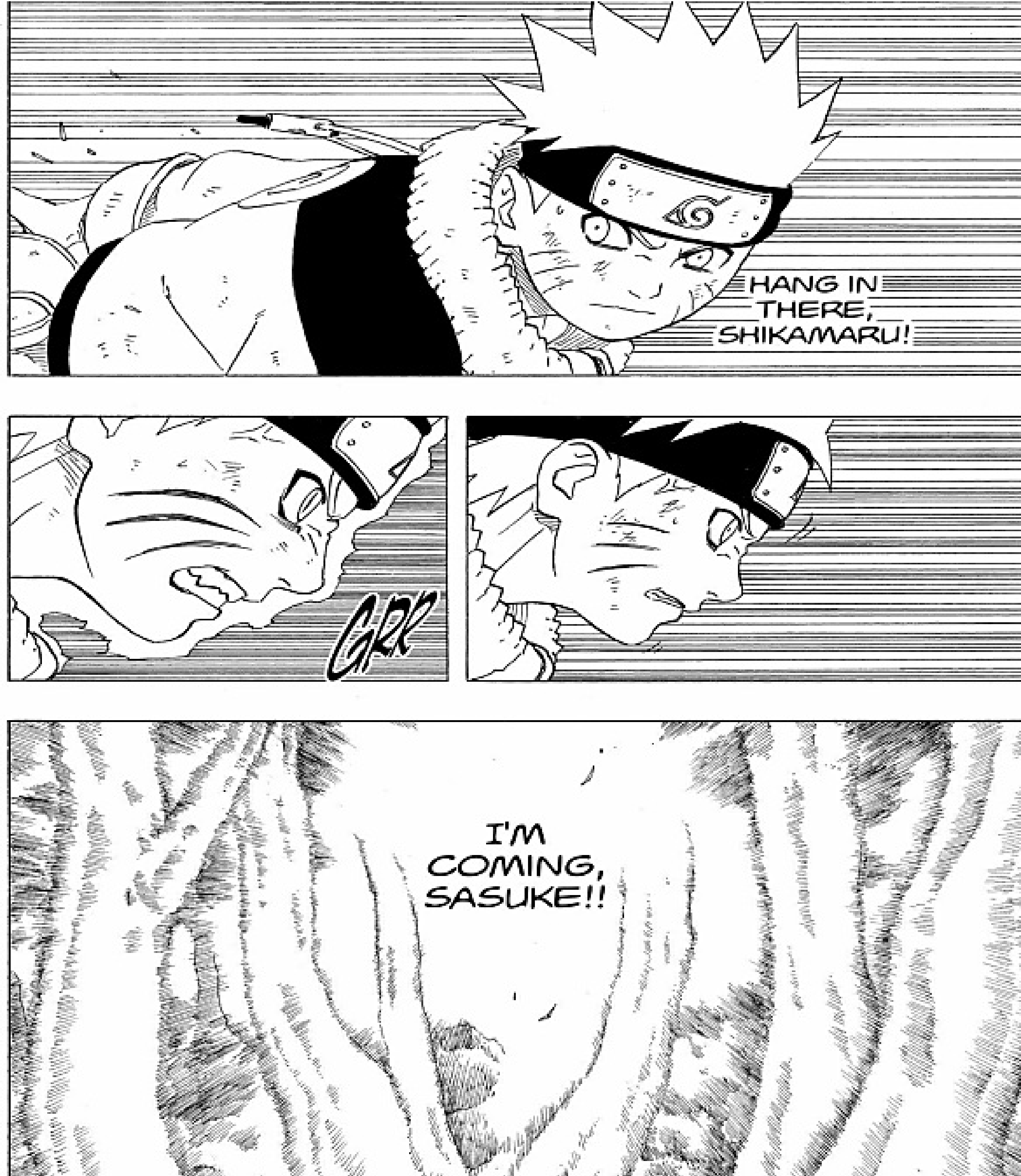
!!

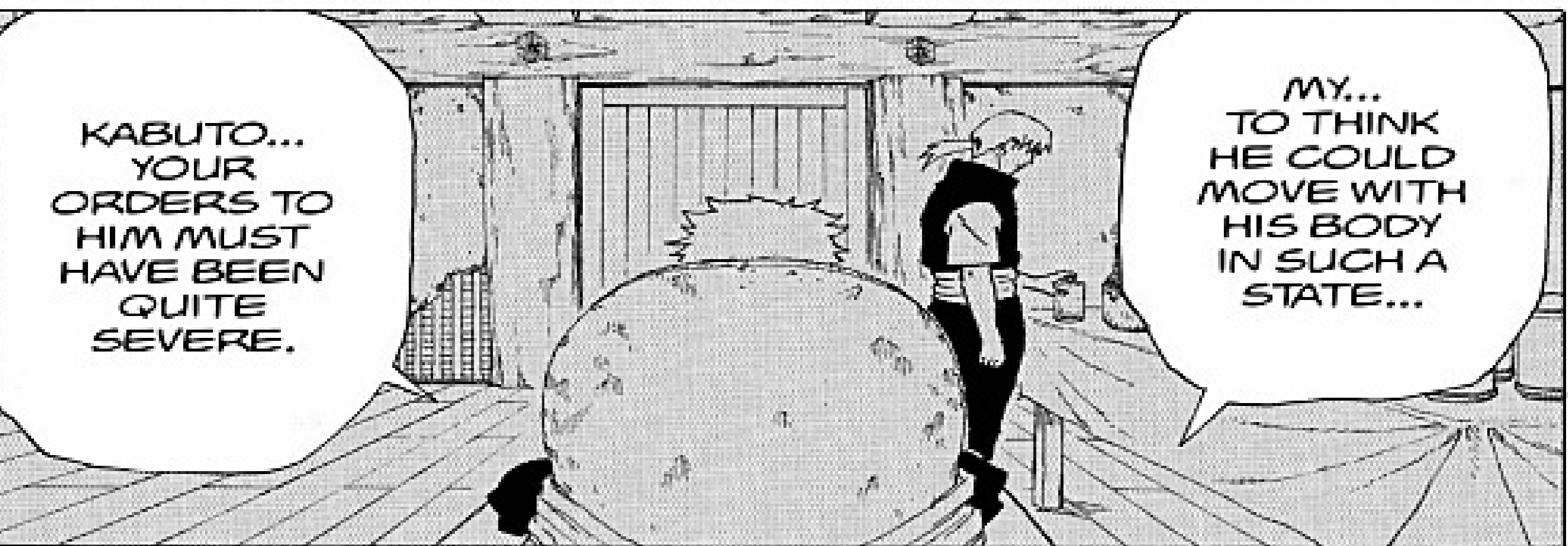
SCUFF

TAK






HANG IN THERE, SHIKAMARU!
GRR
I'M COMING, SASUKE!!

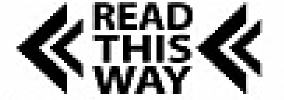

MY... TO THINK HE COULD MOVE WITH HIS BODY IN SUCH A STATE...
KABUTO... YOUR ORDERS TO HIM MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE SEVERE.

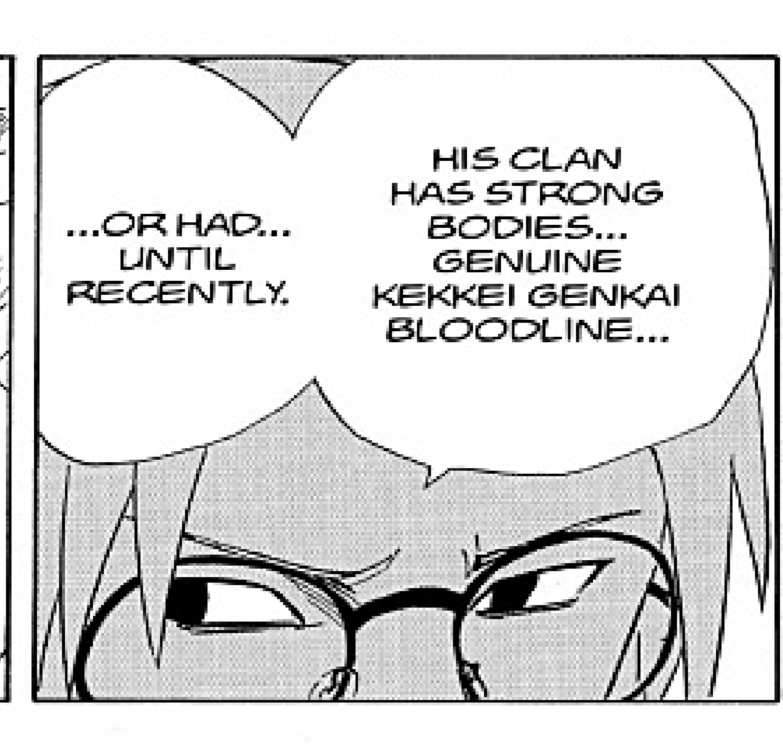

NO, I GAVE NO ORDERS ...
I'M NOT VERY FOND OF COERCION ...

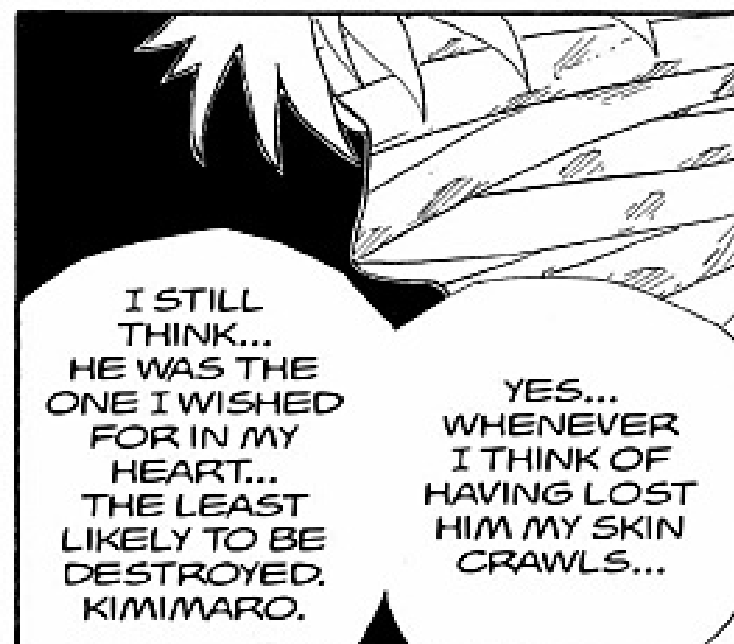


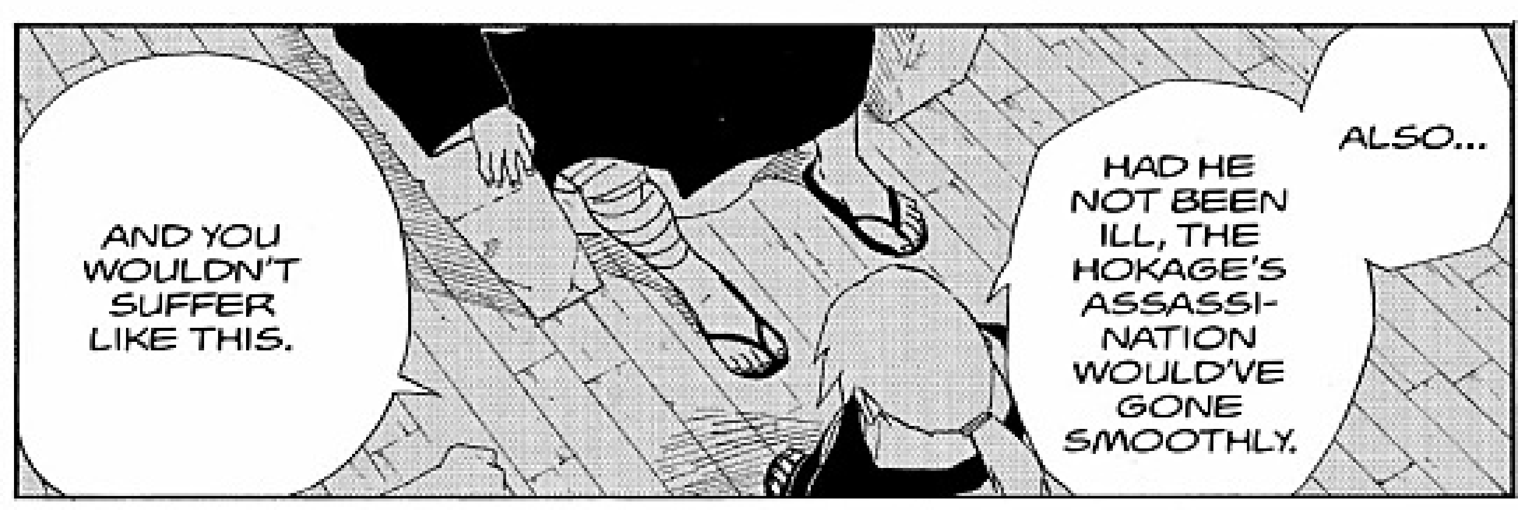

HE DID THIS ON HIS OWN...
...FOR YOU... HE WORSHIPS YOU.

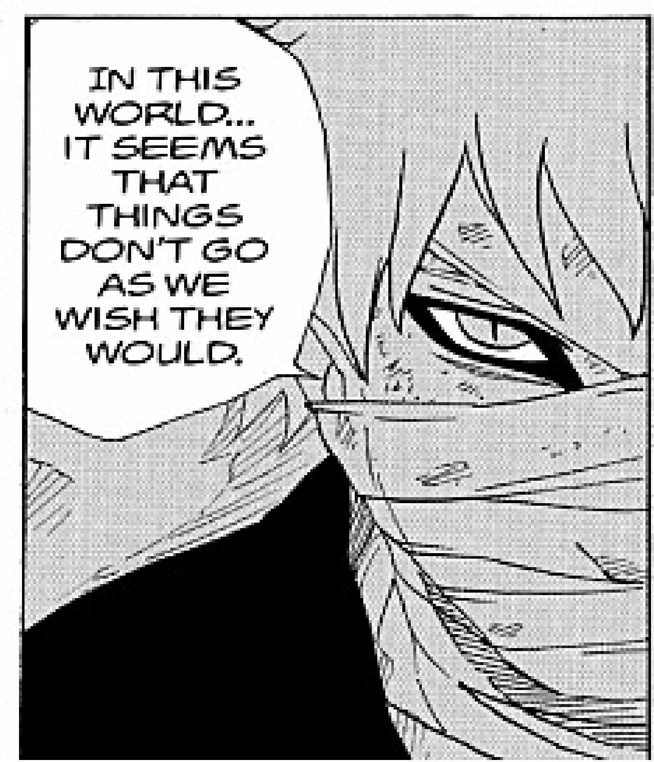

KABUTO...
YOU ARE DESPICABLE...
LORD OROCHI-MARU... KIMIMARO WAS PERFECT.
HIS THOUGHTS IMMERSED IN DARKNESS, JUST LIKE YOURS...
AND HE DEIFIED YOU, WORSHIPPED AND ADORED YOU.


READ THIS WAY


HIS CLAN HAS STRONG BODIES... GENUINE KEKKEI GENKAI BLOODLINE...
...OR HAD... UNTIL RECENTLY.


YES... WHENEVER I THINK OF HAVING LOST HIM MY SKIN CRAWLS...
I STILL THINK... HE WAS THE ONE I WISHED FOR IN MY HEART... THE LEAST LIKELY TO BE DESTROYED. KIMIMARO.

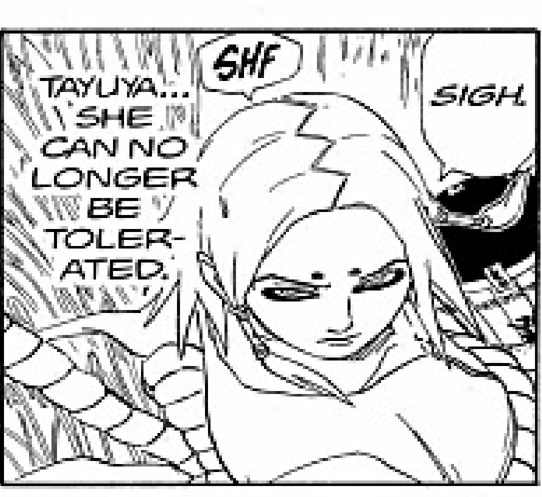

ALSO...
HAD HE NOT BEEN ILL, THE HOKAGE'S ASSASSI-NATION WOULD'VE GONE SMOOTHLY.
AND YOU WOULDN'T SUFFER LIKE THIS.


IN THIS WORLD... IT SEEMS THAT THINGS DON'T GO AS WE WISH THEY WOULD.

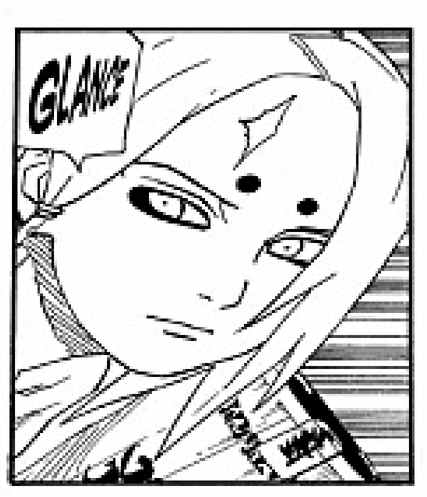

...

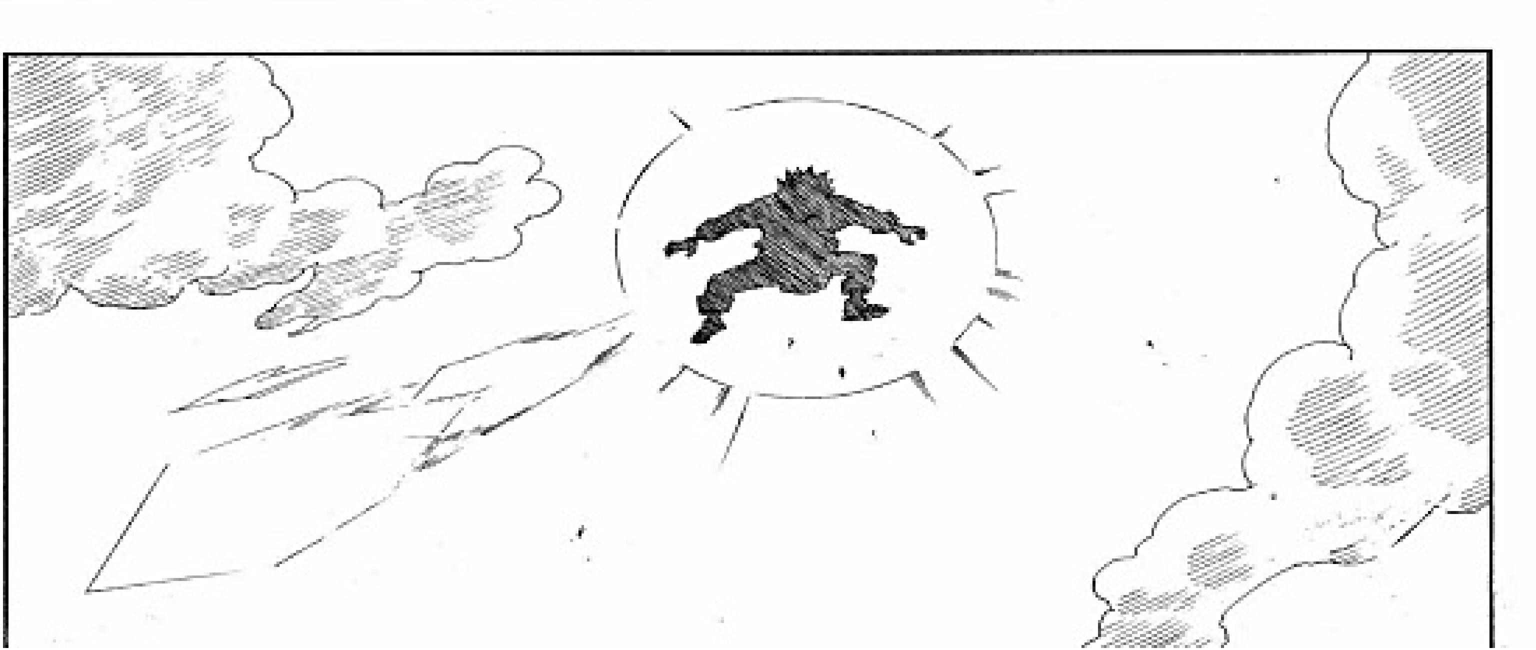

THAT TOO IS MERELY A MATTER OF TIME... LORD OROCHI-MARU.

SHOOM





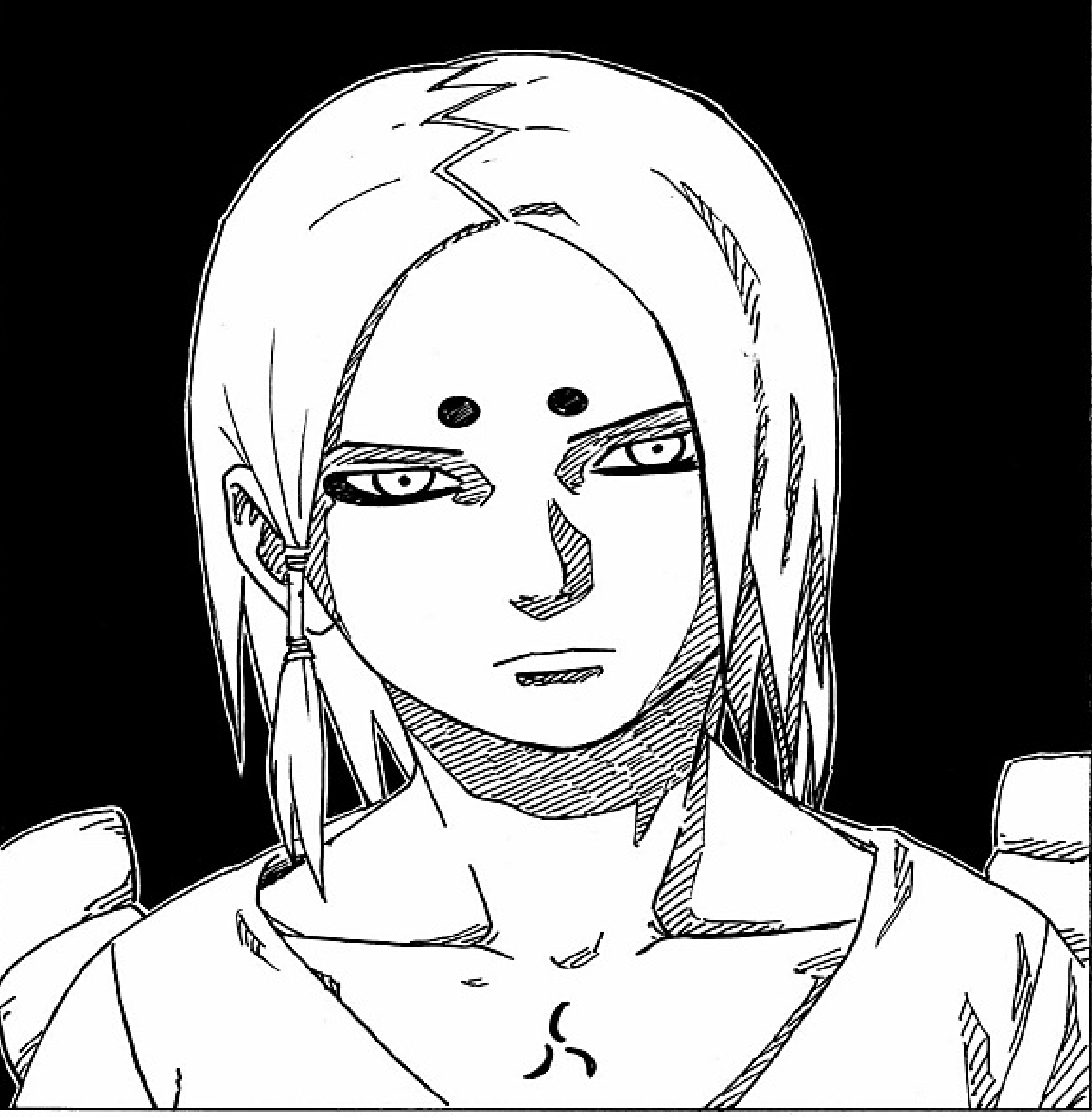


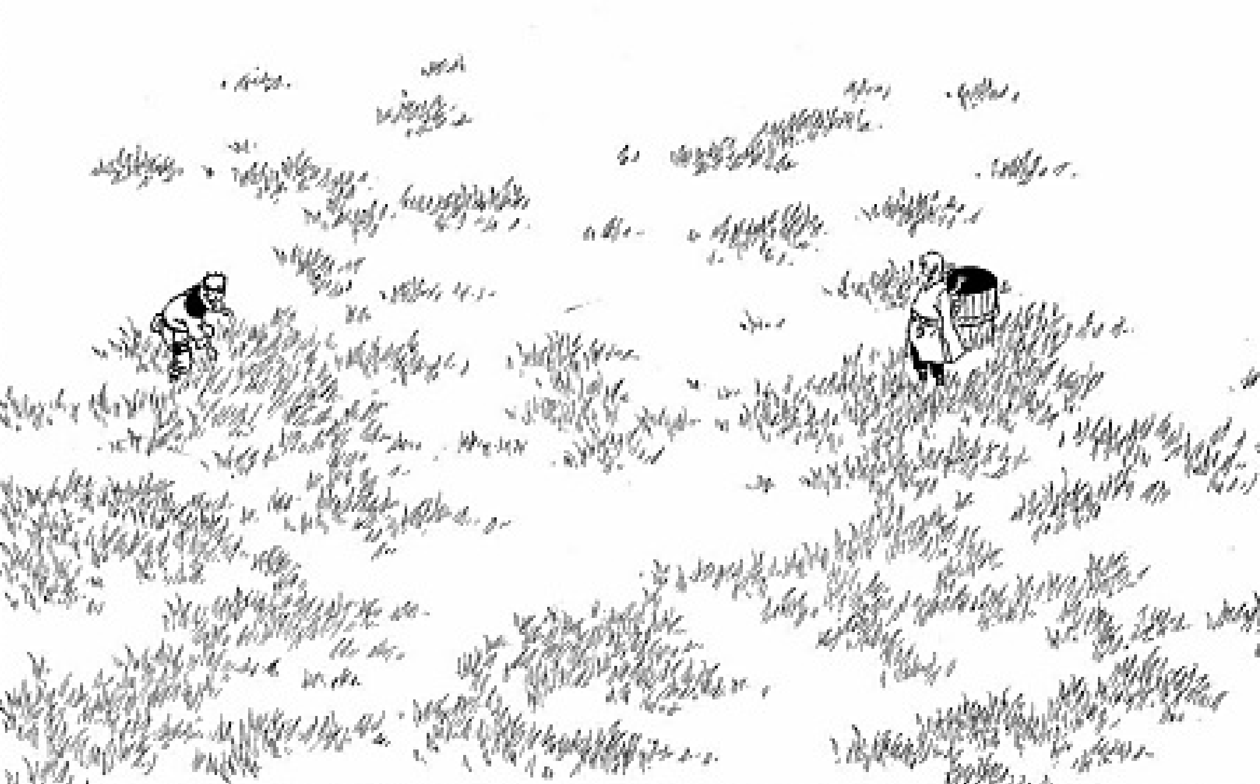


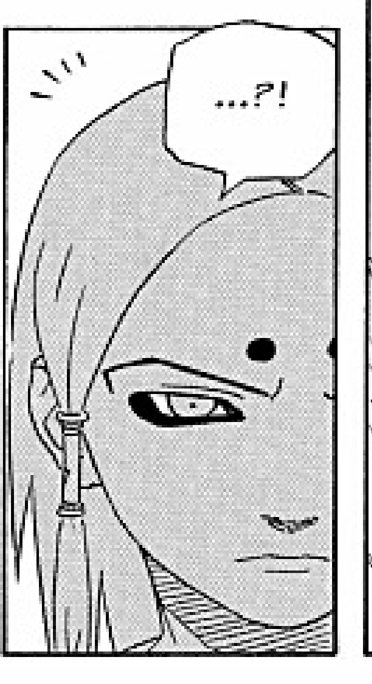

HEY...!
BAM
...
NOW THEN... SHALL WE MAKE THIS QUICK?


NARUTO
TM

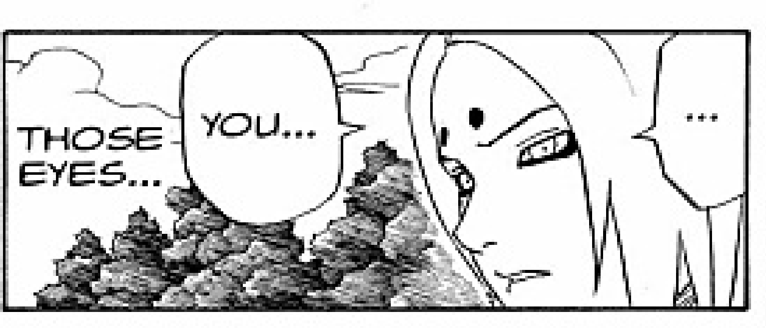
Number 202: Three Wishes!!

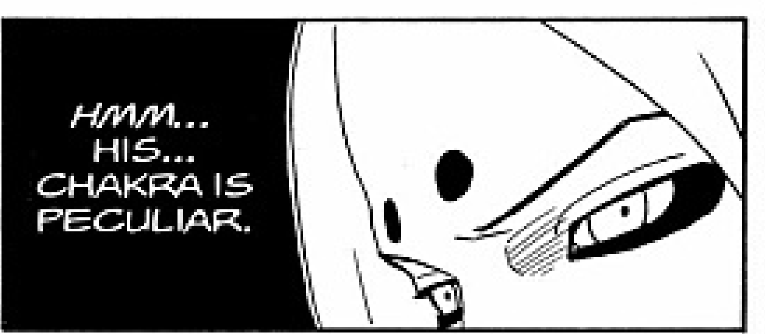





...?!

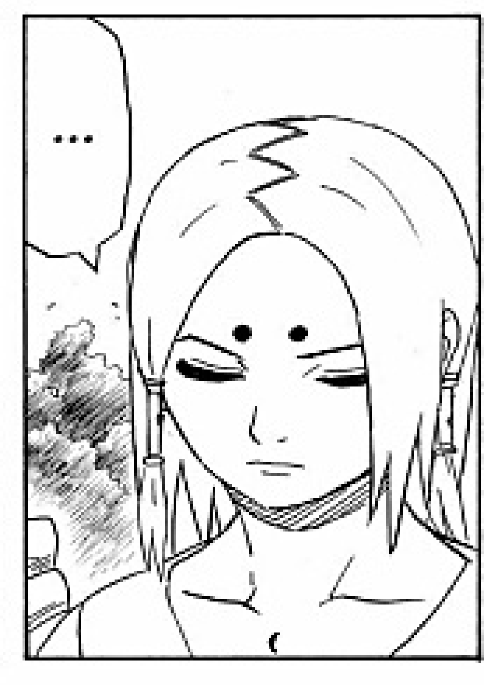

GRRR

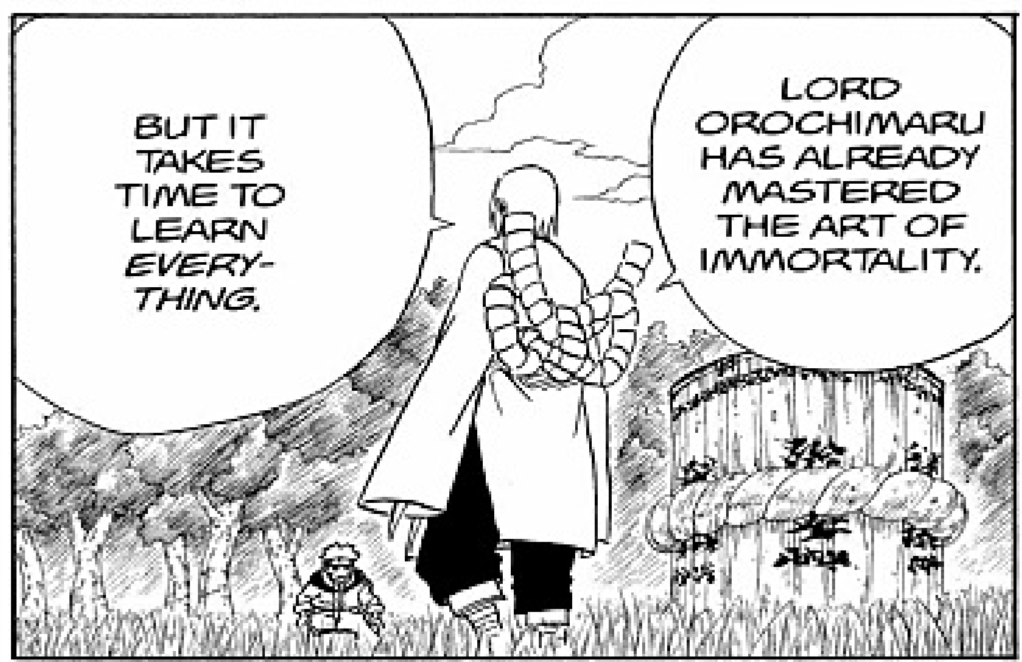

...
YOU...
THOSE EYES...


HMM... HIS... CHAKRA IS PECULIAR.

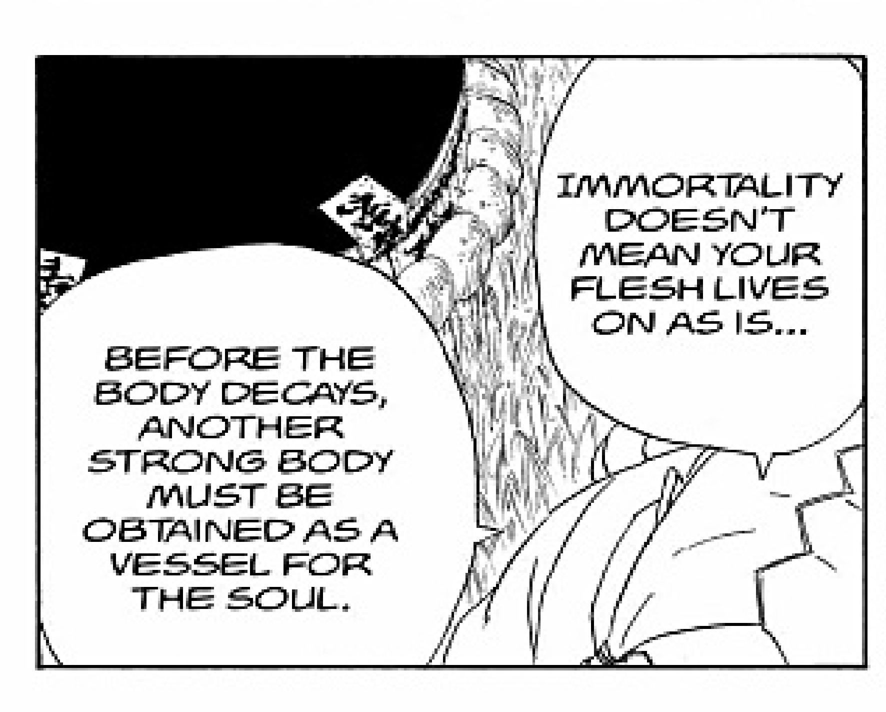

WHAT'S OROCHIMARU DOING?!
WHAT DOES HE WANT WITH SASUKE?!


READ THIS WAY


...


LORD OROCHIMARU HAS ALREADY MASTERED THE ART OF IMMORTALITY.
BUT IT TAKES TIME TO LEARN *EVERY-THING.*


WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH SASUKE?!


IMMORTALITY DOESN'T MEAN YOUR FLESH LIVES ON AS IS...
BEFORE THE BODY DECAYS, ANOTHER STRONG BODY MUST BE OBTAINED AS A VESSEL FOR THE SOUL.

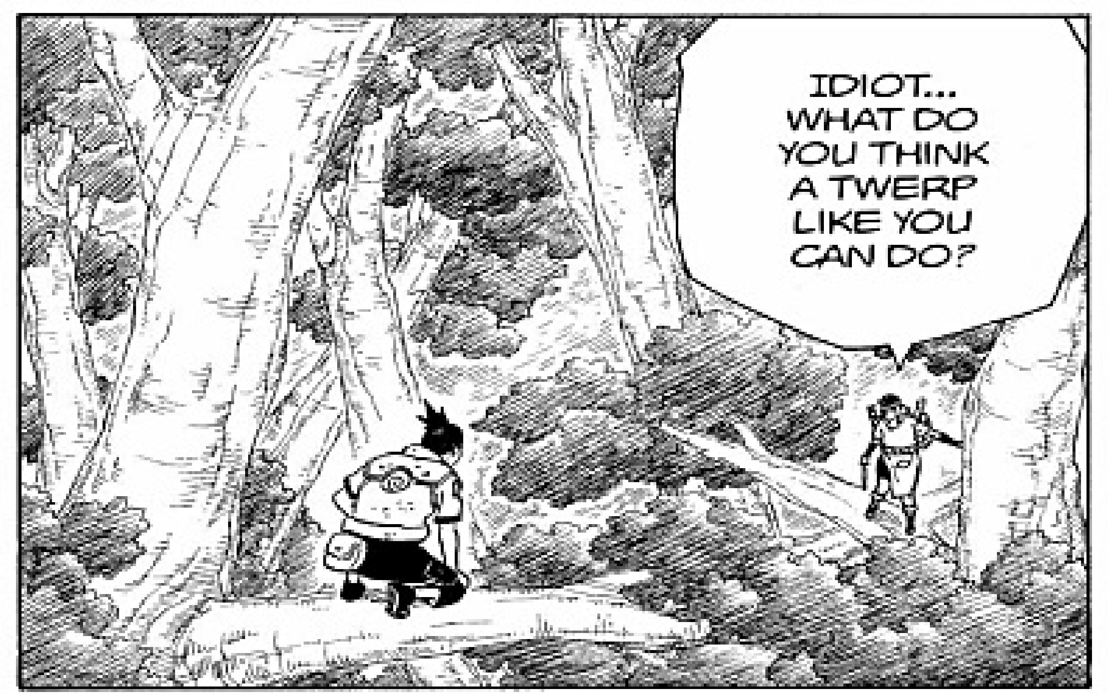

THEN...


SASUKE ...?!


SSH
YES...
PRECISELY ...
GRRR
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN...


READ THIS WAY




IDIOT... WHAT DO YOU THINK A TWERP LIKE YOU CAN DO?


AND... CONSIDER-ING THE TIME YOU'VE SPENT GETTING THIS FAR...
EVERY TIME YOU CATCH UP WITH US, YOU SACRIFICE ONE OF YOUR TEAMMATES IN THE PROCESS...


...

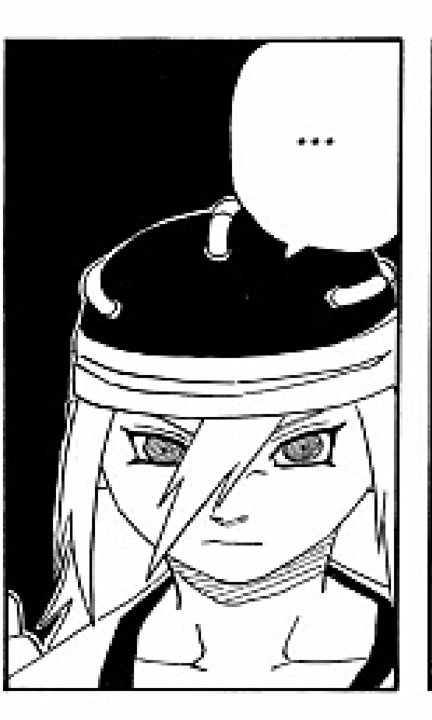

IS THIS SASUKE, OR WHATEVER HIS NAME IS, SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?


YOU'D SACRIFICE EVERYONE FOR JUST ONE TEAM-MATE...?
HEH HEH... SWEET, BUT A COMPLETELY USELESS GESTURE!









AS LEADER, MY TEAMMATES' LIVES ARE IN MY HANDS...

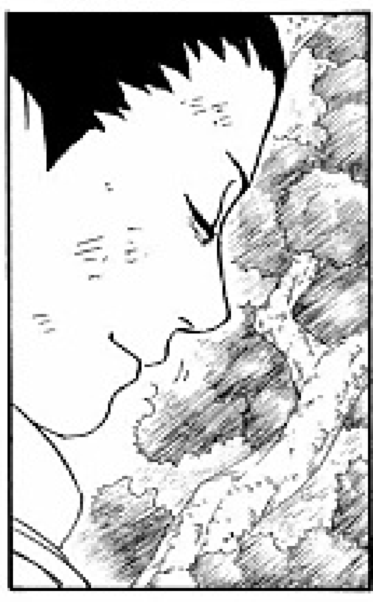
I SHOULD'VE PLACED MORE VALUE ON THE LIVES OF MY TEAMMATES INSTEAD OF ONE PERSON ABDUCTED BY THE ENEMY.

THE RIGHT THING TO DO WOULD'VE BEEN TO ABORT THIS RECKLESS MISSION.


READ THIS WAY


THEN, WHY DIDN'T YOU?


THINGS DON'T ALWAYS WORK BY THE BOOK IN THIS WORLD.




BESIDES, ABANDONING A TEAMMATE...
...TO PROTECT YOURSELF...?
THERE'S NO ONE IN MY SQUAD LIKE THAT.


...
NOT EVEN ME.


...


ANYWAY, A LAZY DAYDREAMER LIKE ME IS A POOR EXCUSE FOR A LEADER...
ALL I CAN DO FOR MY COMRADES...



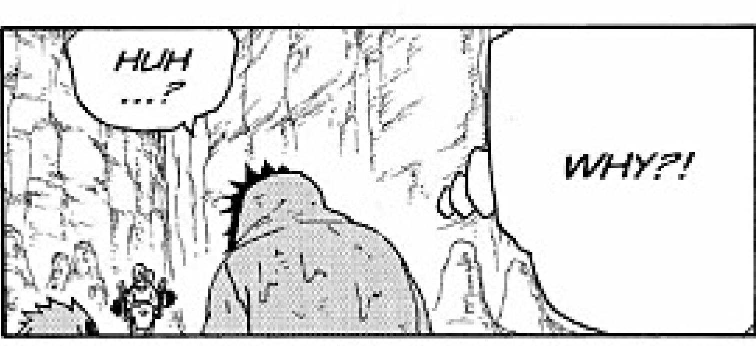


...IS BELIEVE IN THEM...




SPLASH
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE MY TEAM.
WHOAH!!
GRIN
GRAB
SLOOSH
WOOF WOOF!
?!


MY ATTACK WAS DEAD ON, BUT NO EFFECT ?!
AND HOW DID HE COUNTER ?!


HUH ...?
WHY?!

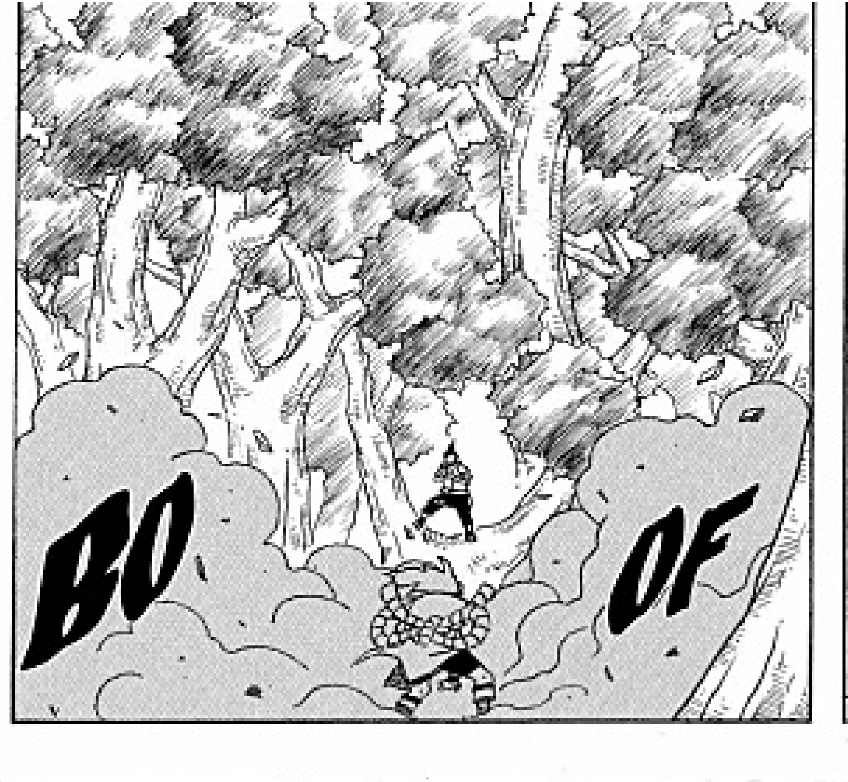



LISTEN, AKAMARU. WE'LL NAIL HIM WITH GATSUUGA...
ARF ...


TSK...


READ THIS WAY
FOOSH
POOF
SPLASH
!
SPL
OSH
GATSUUGA! FANG-OVER-FANG!!
WH
IRRRR


KUCHI-
YOSE NO
JUTSU!
THE
ART OF
SUMMON-
ING!!
BA
M

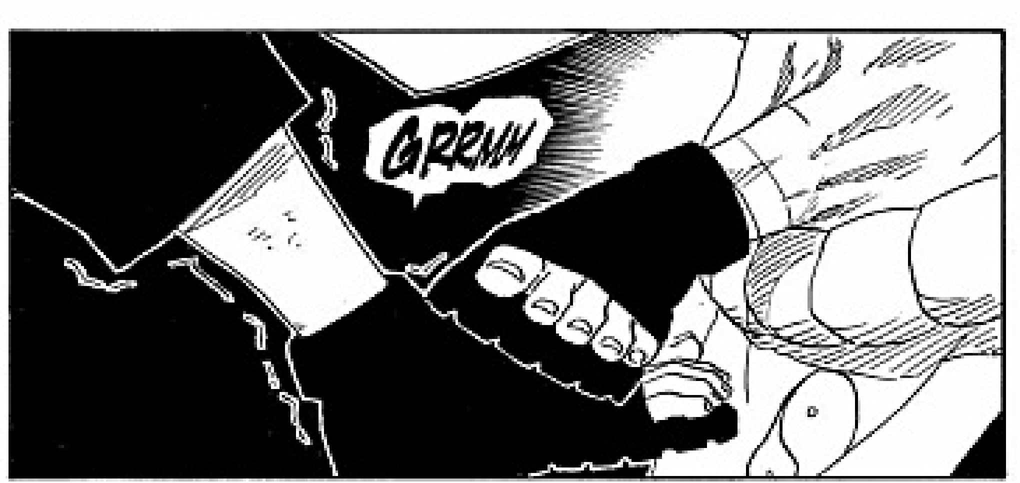

BO
OF


...
OH,
NO...
THIS
IS
BAD...


BOOMNNG

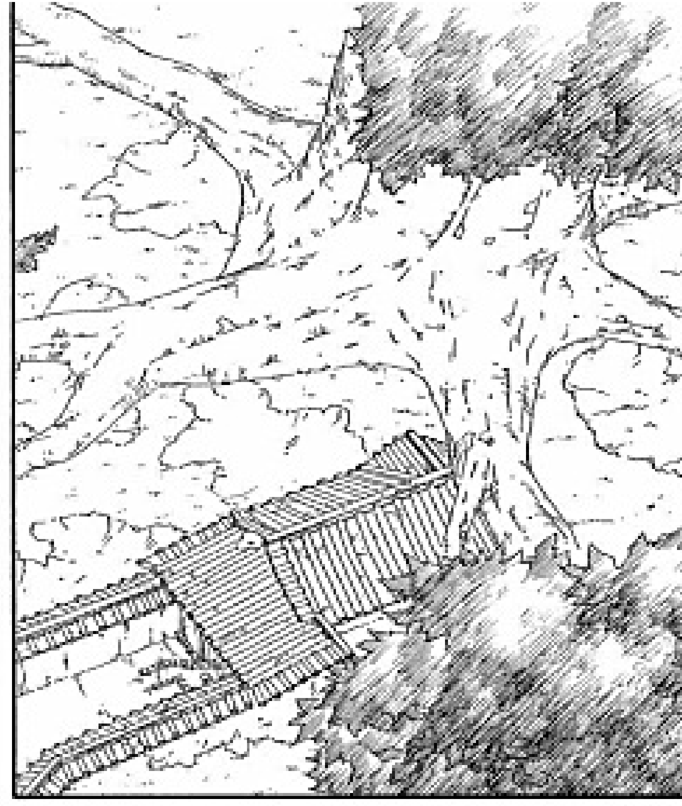

I'M GONNA PLAY A MELODY OF DEATH FOR YOU!
IT'S YOU...
...WHO SHOULDN'T UNDER-ESTIMATE US!

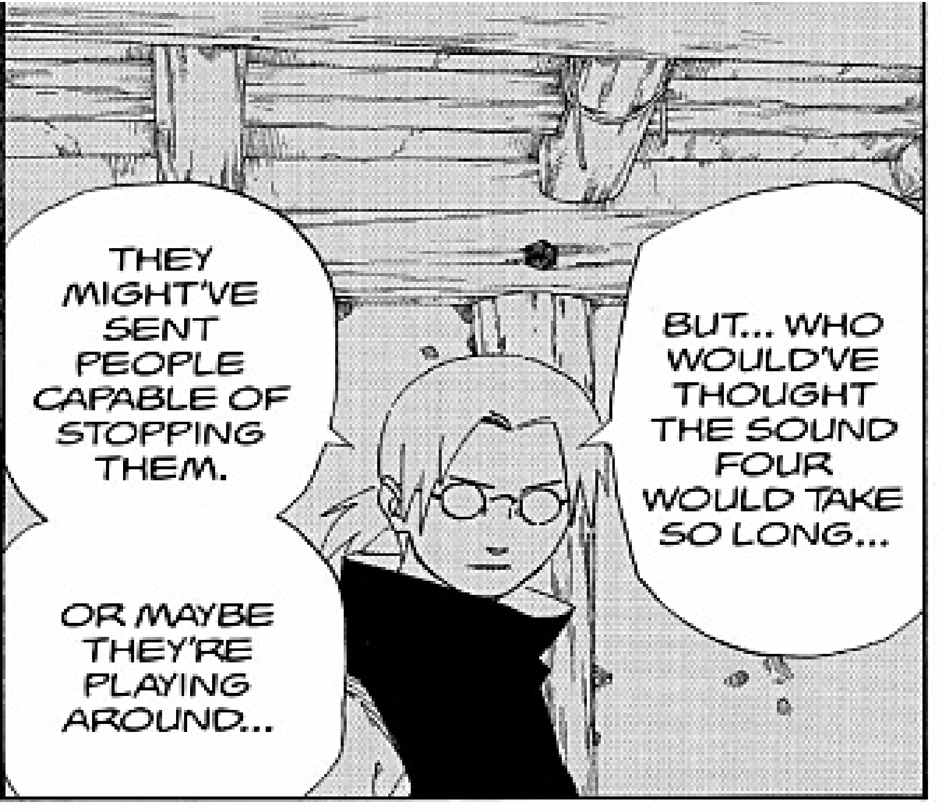
TH
AK!
WHAT IS THIS GUY?!

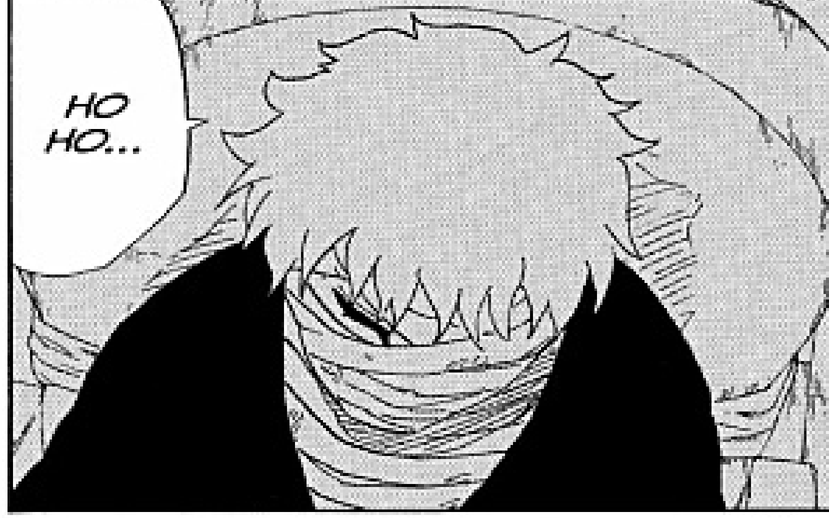


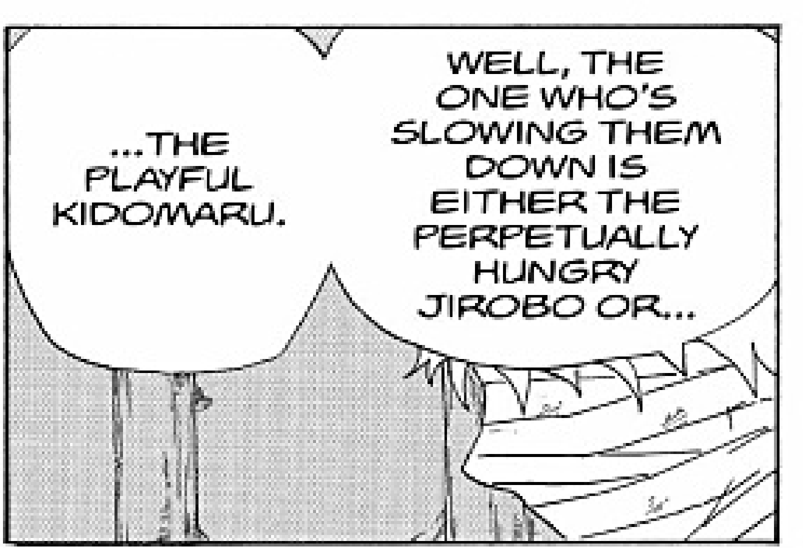


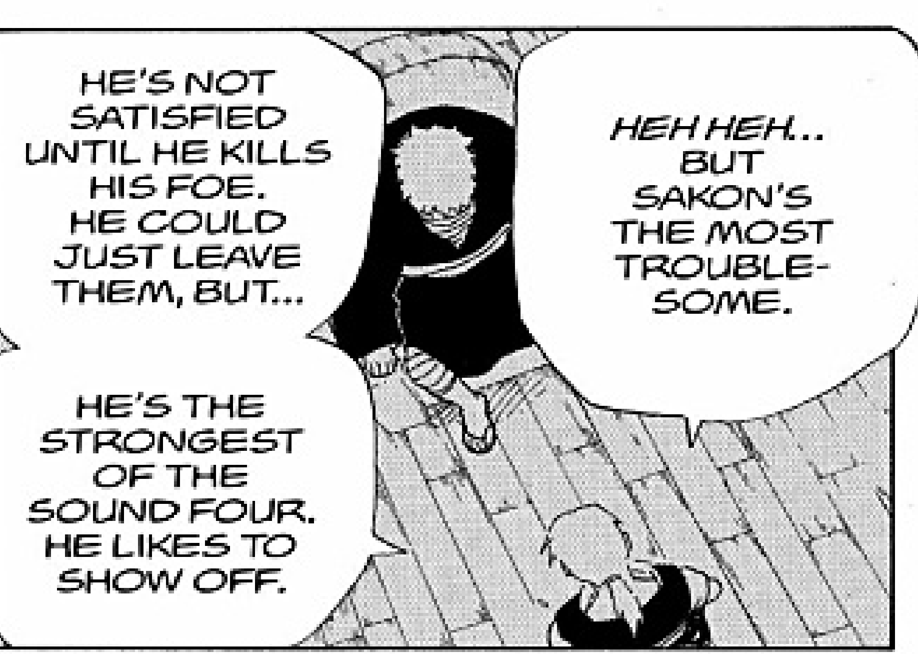
RIGHT... SAKON?
TWO ON TWO. WORKS FOR ME.



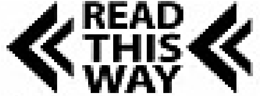

BUT... WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THE SOUND FOUR WOULD TAKE SO LONG...
THEY MIGHT'VE SENT PEOPLE CAPABLE OF STOPPING THEM.
OR MAYBE THEY'RE PLAYING AROUND...


HO HO...


WELL, THE ONE WHO'S SLOWING THEM DOWN IS EITHER THE PERPETUALLY HUNGRY JIROBO OR...
...THE PLAYFUL KIDOMARU.

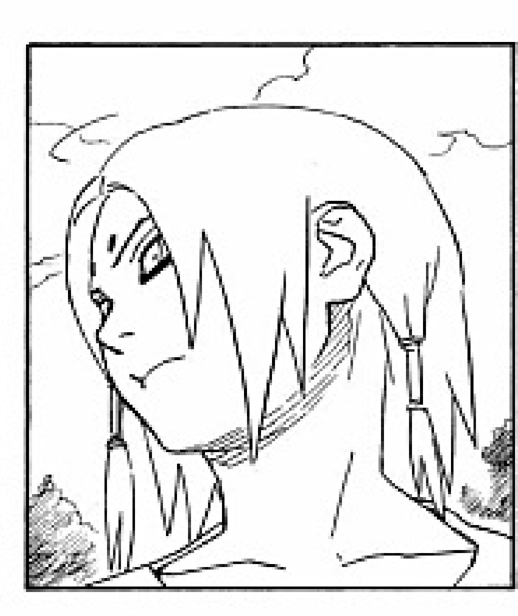

HEH HEH... BUT SAKON'S THE MOST TROUBLE-SOME.
HE'S NOT SATISFIED UNTIL HE KILLS HIS FOE. HE COULD JUST LEAVE THEM, BUT...
HE'S THE STRONGEST OF THE SOUND FOUR. HE LIKES TO SHOW OFF.

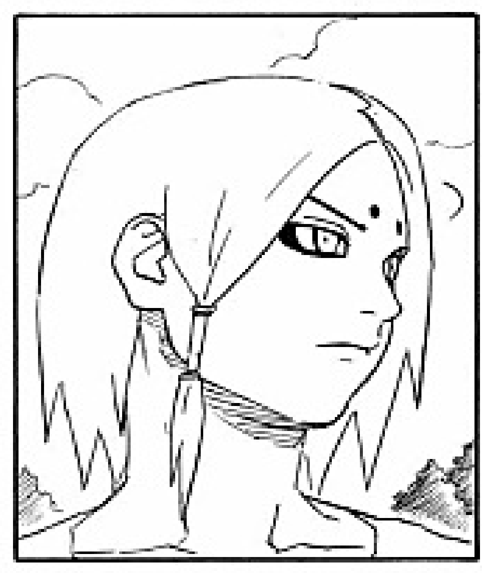

HO HO... WELL...
TAYUYA IS NO LESS VAIN.

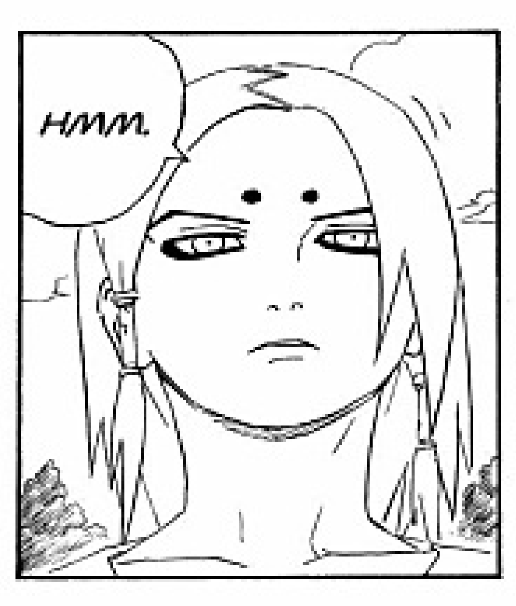

READ THIS WAY


...

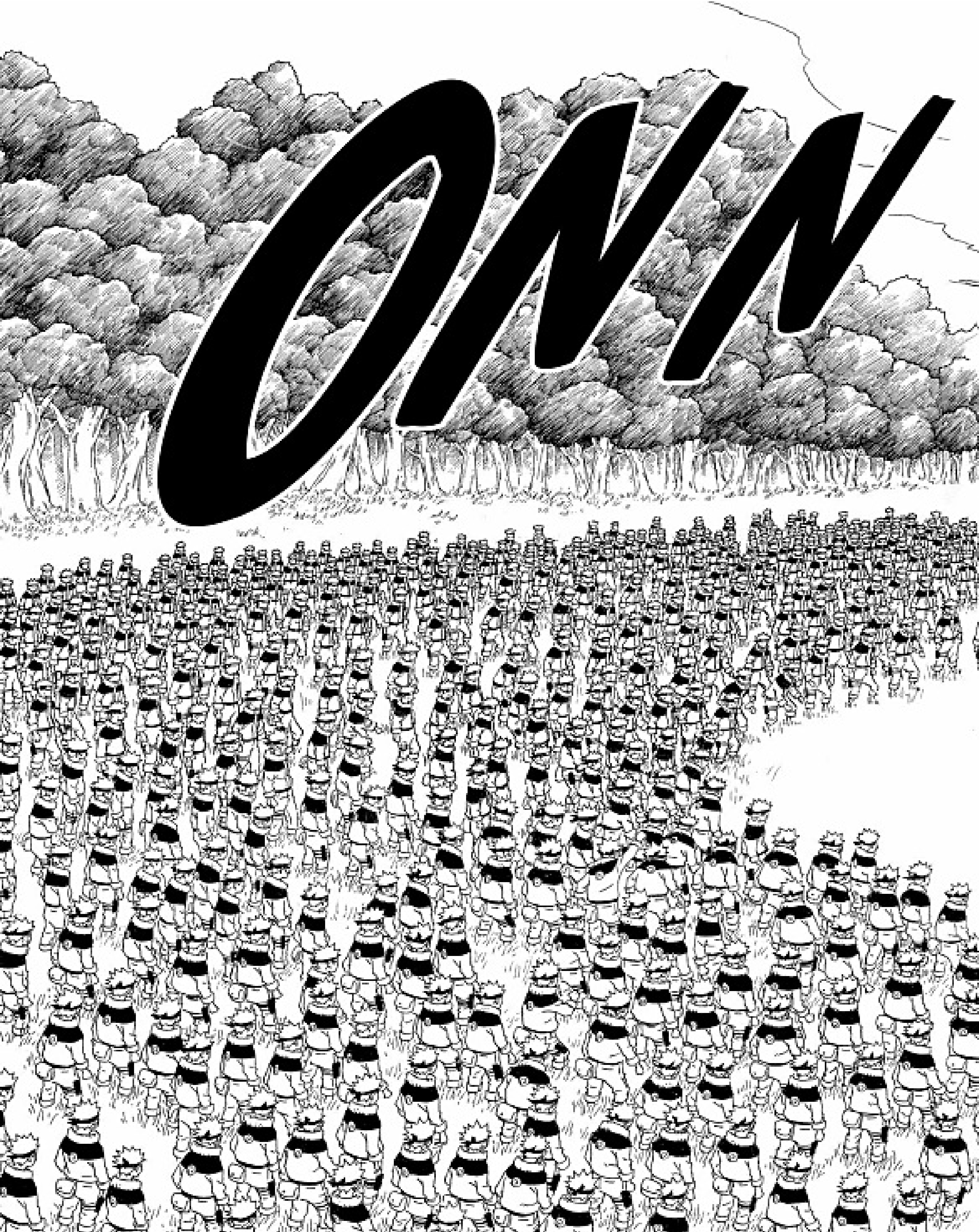

WELL... IN ANY CASE, NOW THAT KIMIMARO'S THERE, WE WON'T FAIL...
HE'LL CLEAN UP WHOEVER'S BECOME USELESS TO ME...






HMM.


I WON'T GIVE UP ON SASUKE, NO MATTER WHAT...

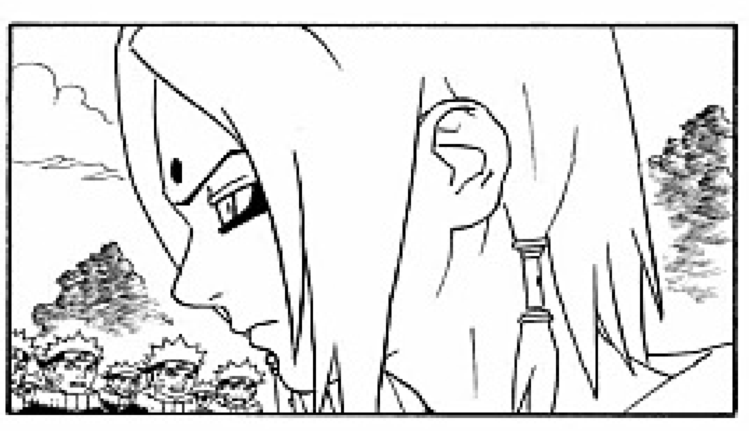

ONN

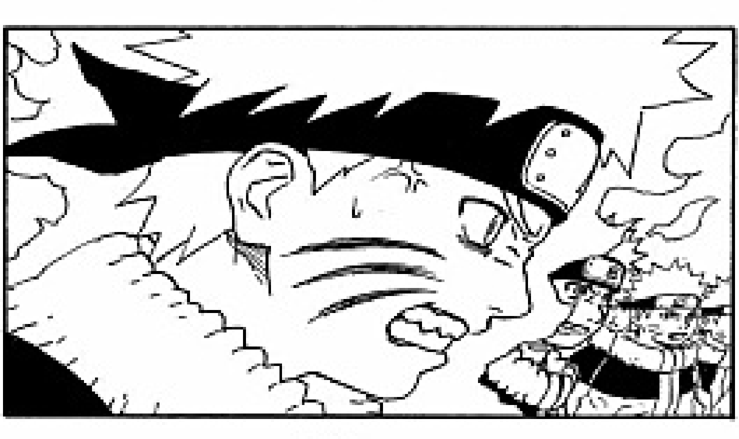
NN G

INTERESTING.


NARUTO
TM

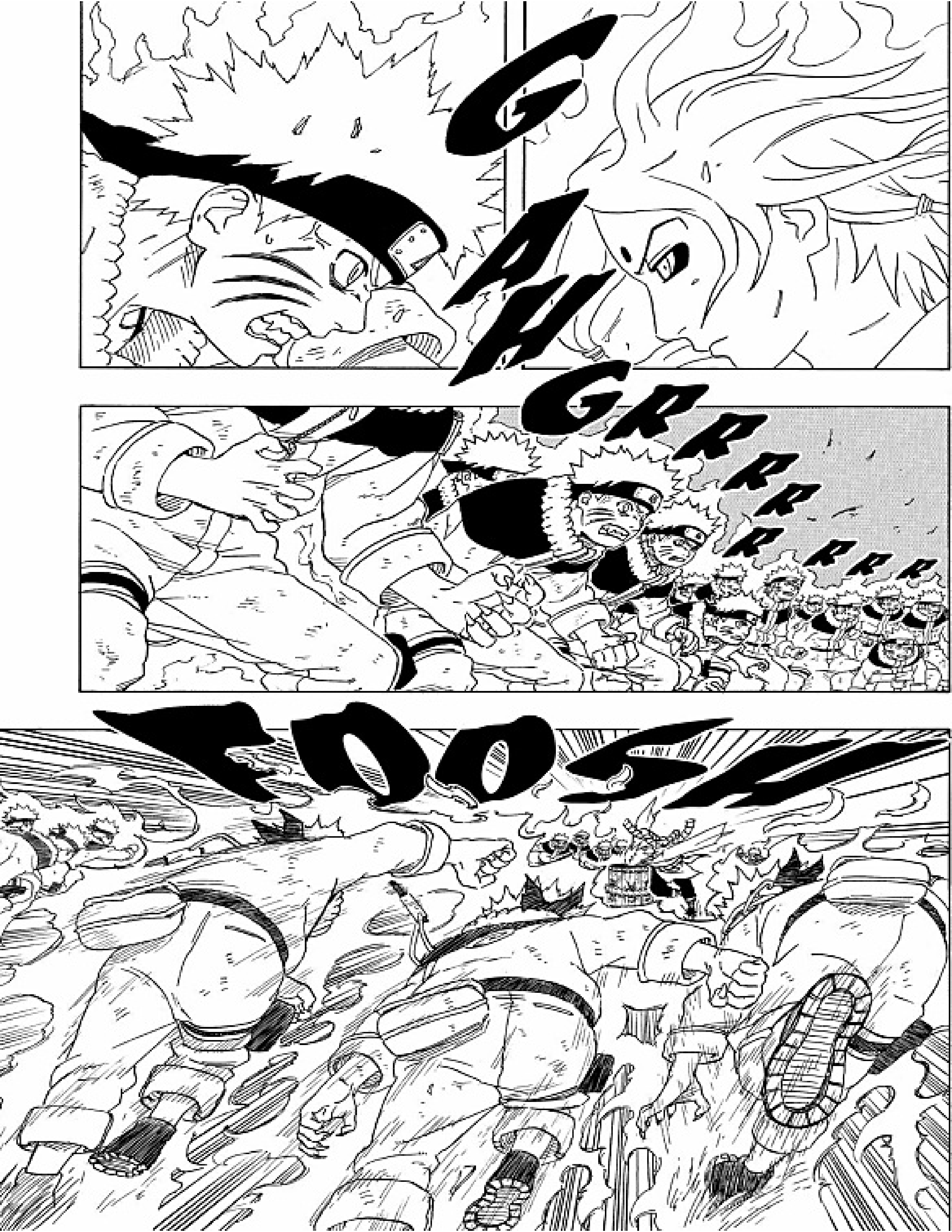

Number 203: Sakon's Secret
男はやっぱり!






COME TO ME.
FFMM


GRR
YOU'RE SO OVER!


GAHH
GRRRRRRRRRRR
FOOSH

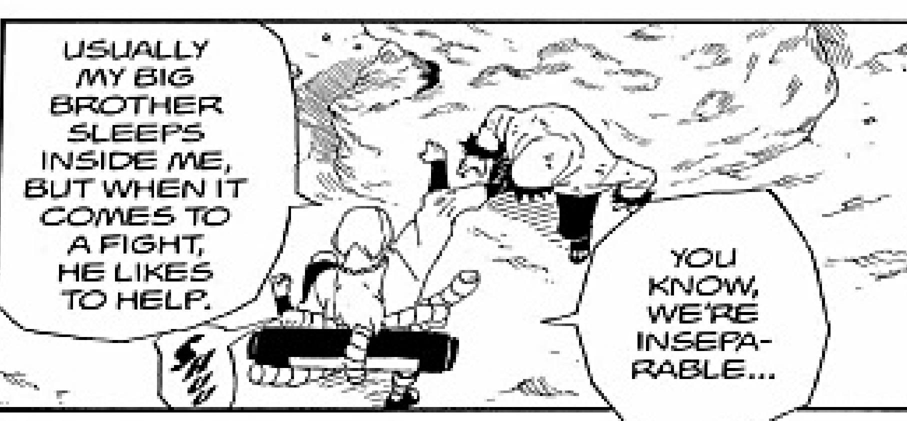





TARENKEN! MULTIPLE FISTS BARRAGE!!
SMASH
!
HMPH...
NGH.
!

GRAB





SHUU

SHUU


READ THIS WAY
THOK
LIKE THIS!
AGH!!
WOOF! WOOF!
FWUP
TAREN-KYAKU! MULTIPLE LEGS BARRAGE!!
AAUGH!!
WHIMPER!
A TRIPLE KICK! FEEL THE POWER? NOW...
!
THERE'S NO TIME FOR GAMES, SAKON.
SHU
SHU


THEY ALL DIE NOW!
ACTIVATE SECOND STATE!!
SHUUU


READ THIS WAY


?!!


SHUU
YOU'RE IMPETUOUS, BIG BROTHER.


HUF HUF

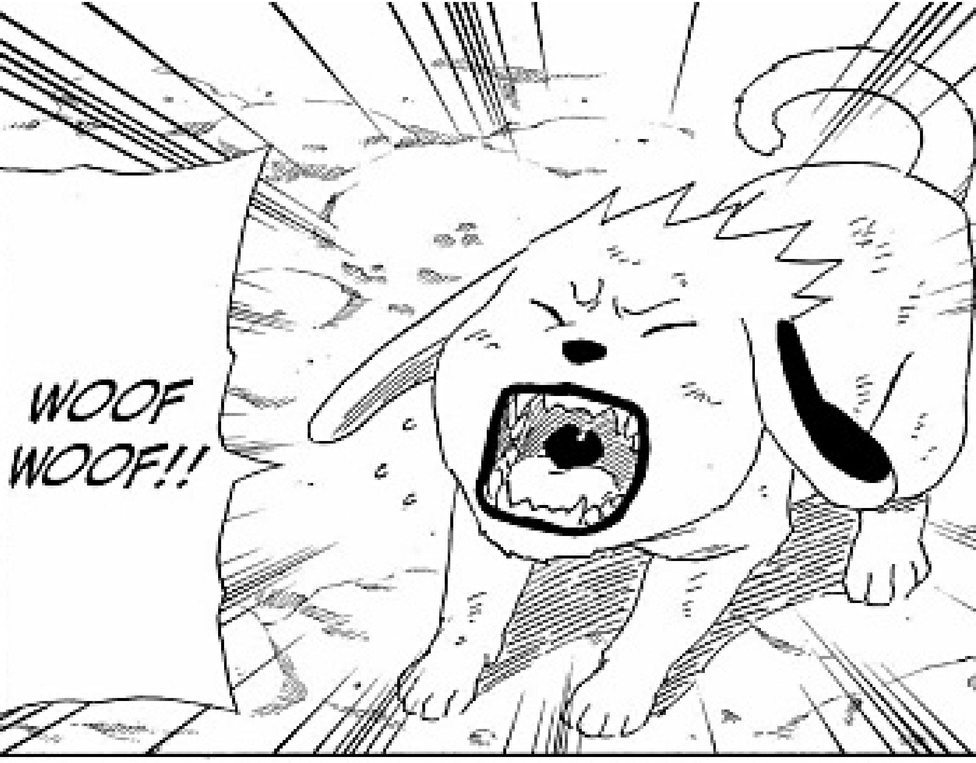

WHIMPER.
SHIVR SHIVR


AKAMARU...
I SEE... YOU'RE SAYING THOSE HORNS AREN'T FAKE...
THE SITUATION WAS ALREADY HOPELESS WHEN THAT OTHER GUY SHOWED UP. NOW SAKON HAS TEN TIMES MORE CHAKRA...?

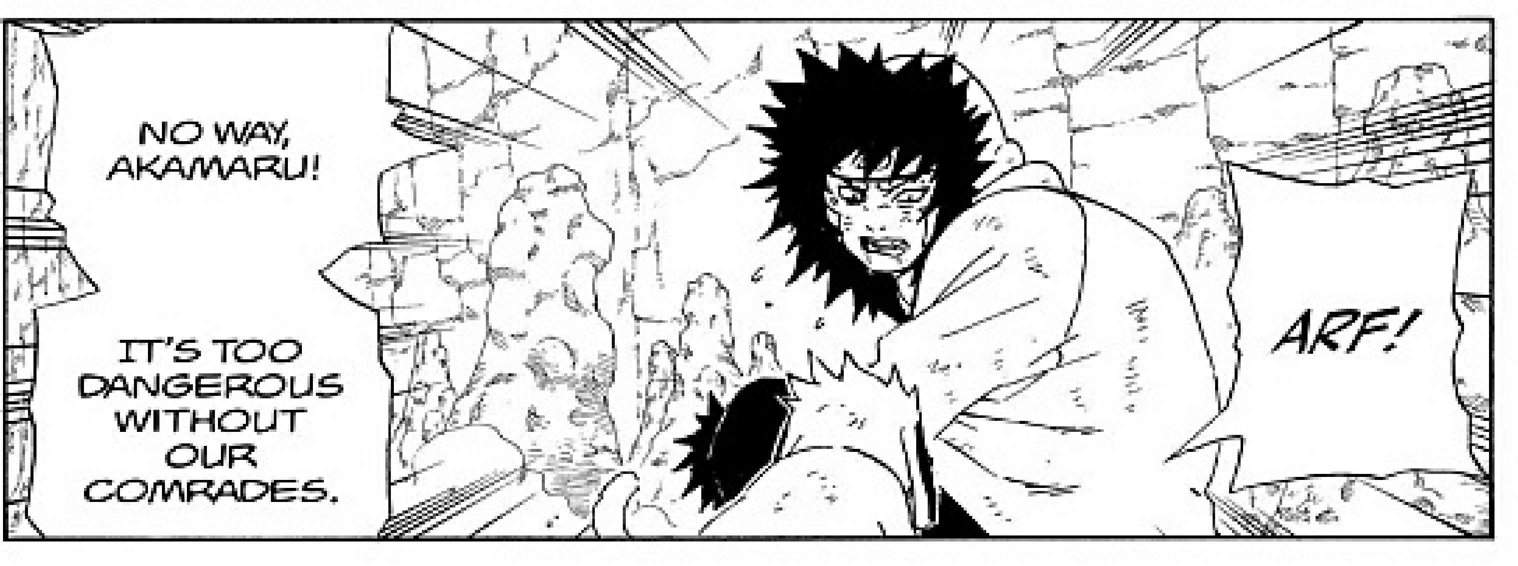

HOW DO YOU WANT THEM, BIG BROTHER?
IN PIECES...



!!
YOU WANNA DO THAT?!



WOOF WOOF!!



ARF!
NO WAY, AKAMARU!
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS WITHOUT OUR COMRADES.



YOU KNOW IF WE USE THAT JUTSU, BOTH OF US...
...OUR CHAKRA WILL RUN OUT AND WE WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE ANYMORE.



IF WE MESS UP...
WE'LL DIE HERE...

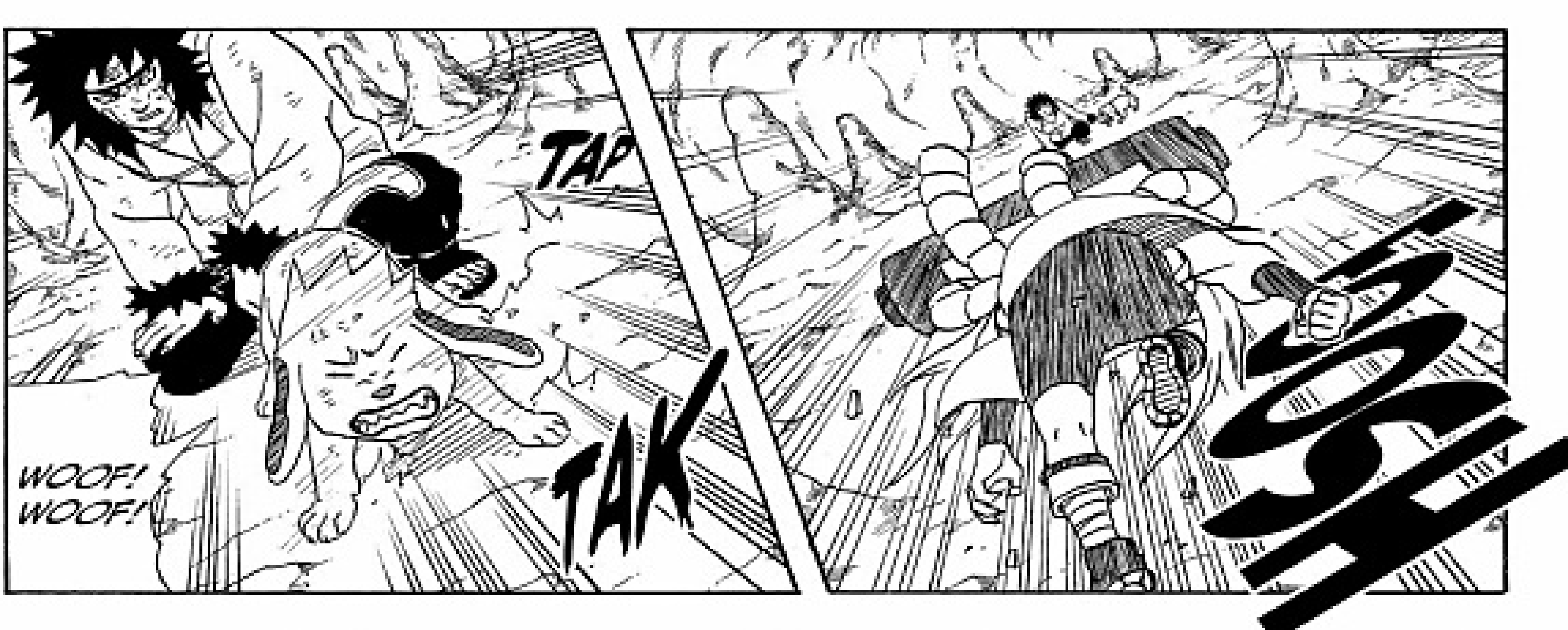


OUCH ...!


READ THIS WAY


GRR


...
AKA-MARU...


TAP
TAK
WOOF! WOOF!


...

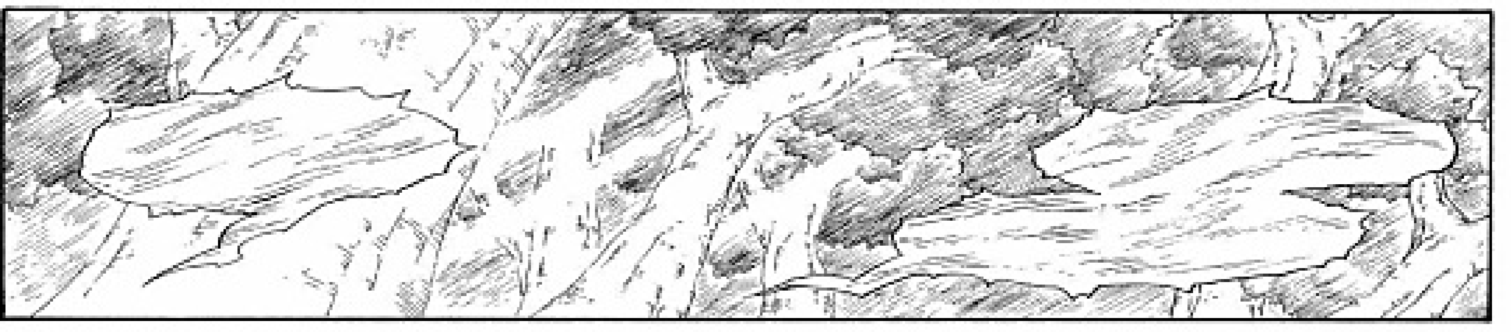

HMPH... YOU BIT ME... I'M A PATHETIC MASTER.
AKAMARU... YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S THE ONLY WAY...!

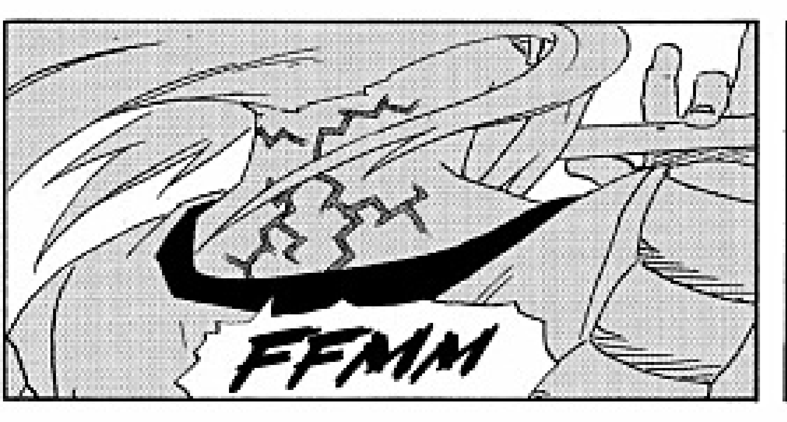


GAROGA! WOLF FANG-OVER-FANG!

SKF

ARF!!








READ THIS WAY


SMASH


UGH!




TWITCH


SHE CONTROLS THEM WITH HER FLUTE?!
!

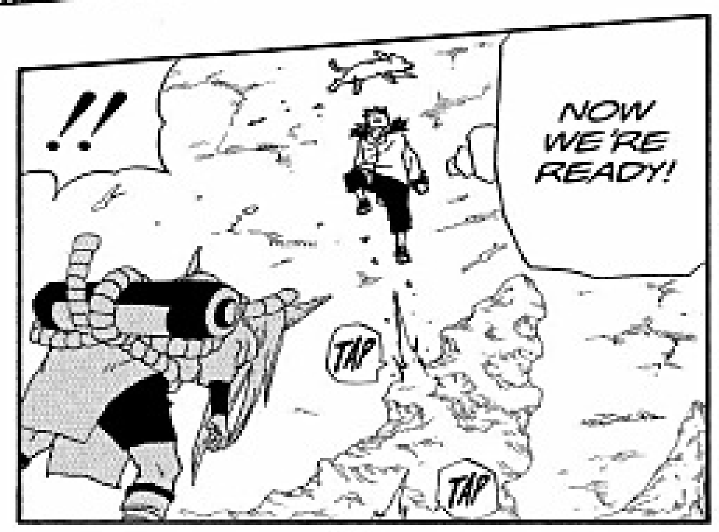

POW


READ
THIS
WAY

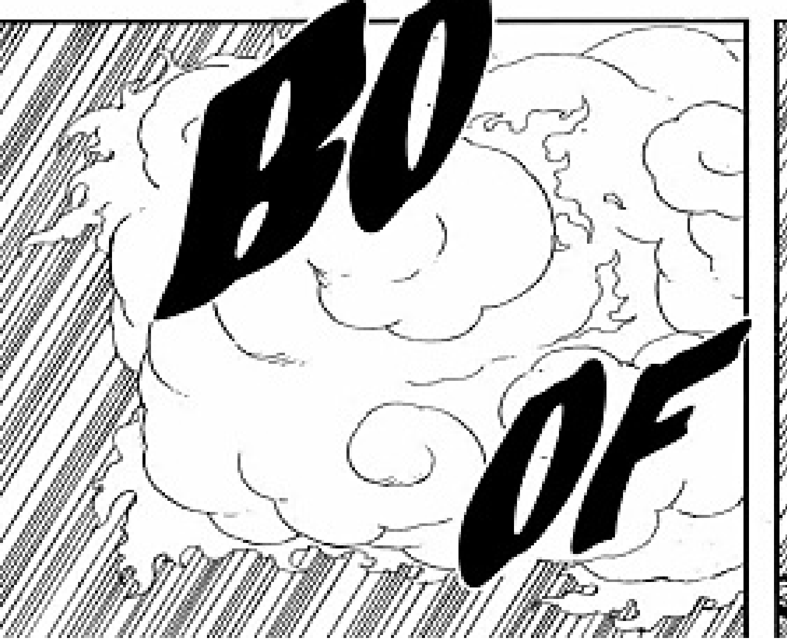

AKA-
MARU,
NOW!
GRAB


ARF!
SPRAAAY
DYNAMIC
MARKING!!


WHA...
DID HE
JUST
...?!
ZAP
TAK
?!

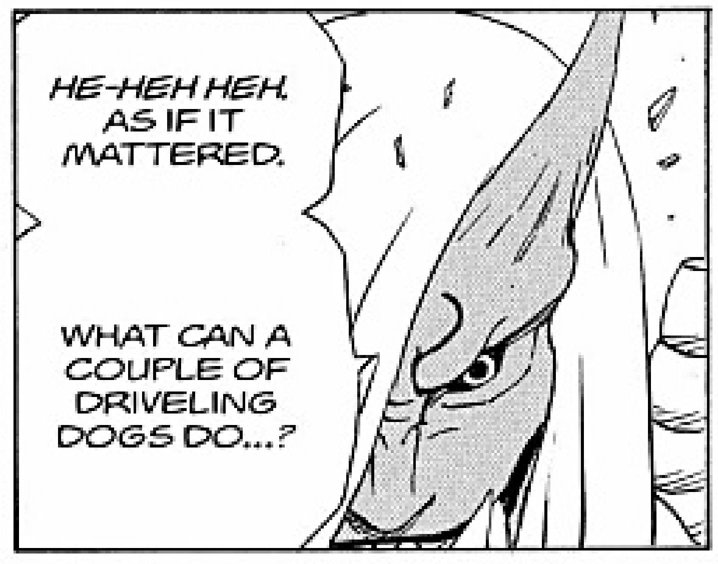

NOW
WE'RE
READY!
!!
TAP
TAP

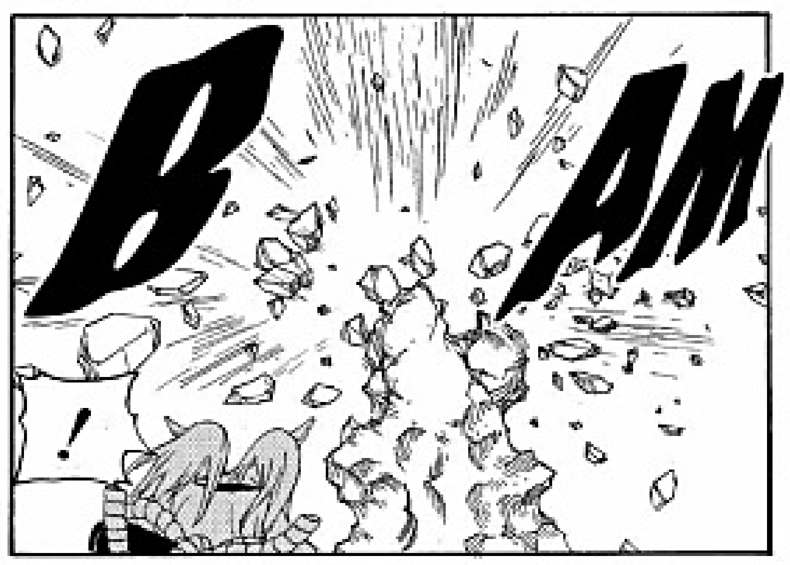

INUZUKA
STYLE!
MAN-BEAST
TRANSFOR-
MATION
COMBO!!
TUMP

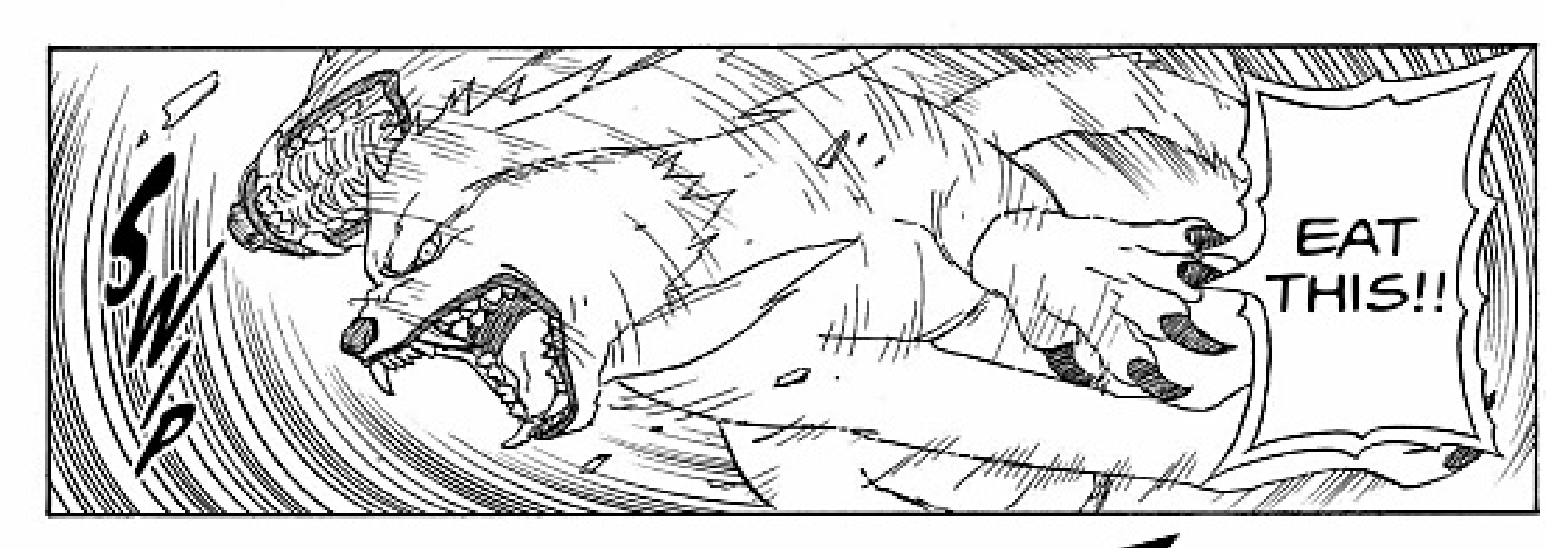

BOOF


GRR
SOTORO! TWO-HEADED WOLF!!
DRIP DRIP


READ THIS WAY


HE-HEH HEH. AS IF IT MATTERED.
WHAT CAN A COUPLE OF DRIVELING DOGS DO...?


BAM
!


EAT THIS!!

ARGH!

ZING

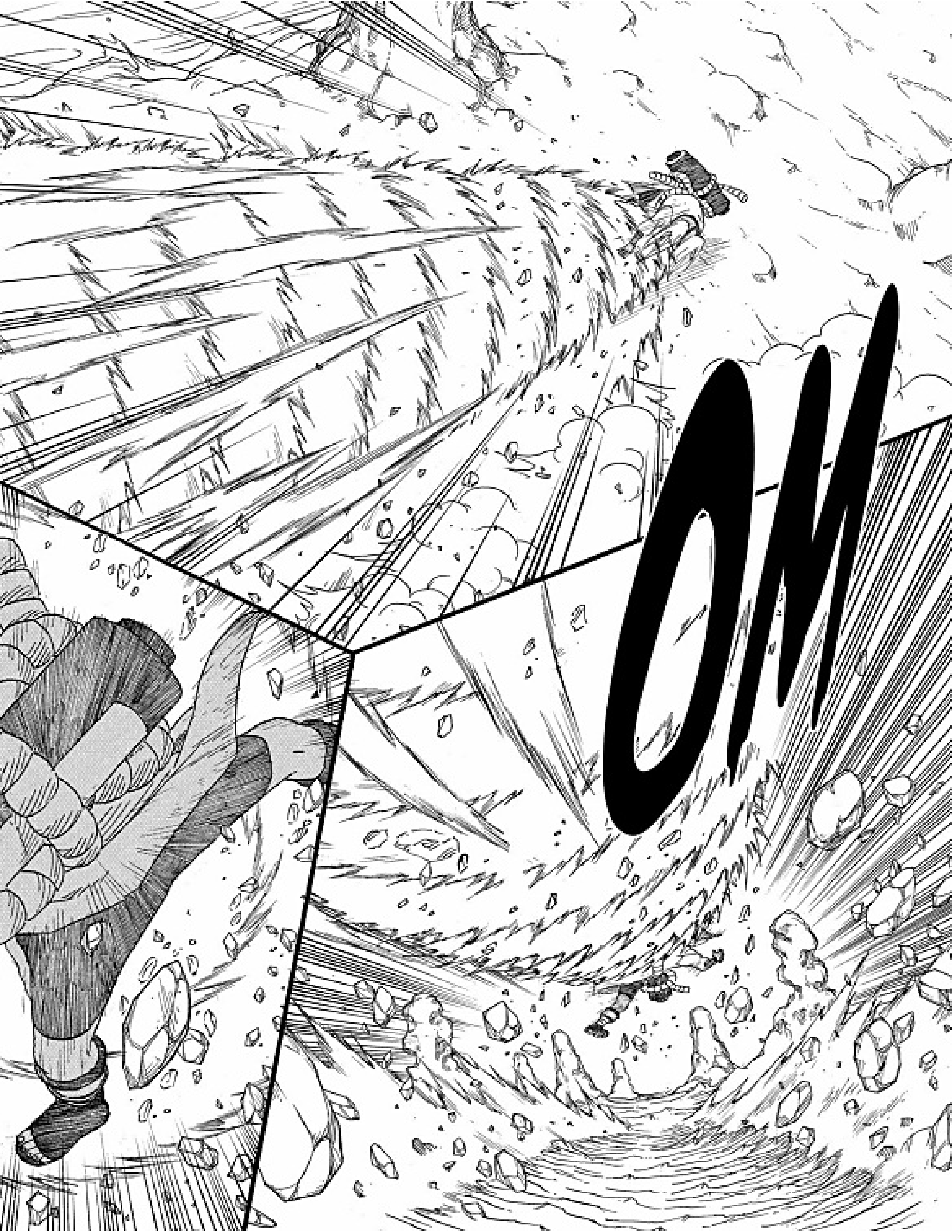
GAROGA!
WOLF
FANG-
OVER-
FANG!!


!
SLIP
DROOL ?!
SAKON, WHAT'RE YOU DOING? ON THE RIGHT!!
?!!
*@&%...
THO

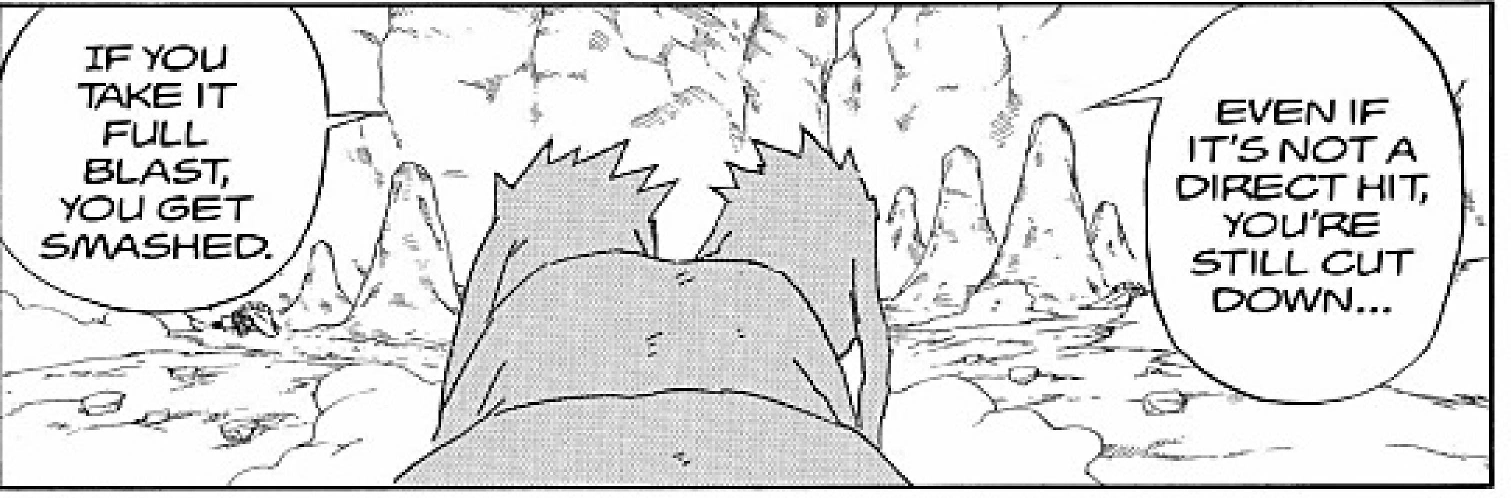

NARUTO
TM

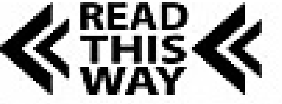

Number 204: Ukon's Prowess


READ THIS WAY
THO
SHREDD
THUD
THUD


OM


HA... HOW'S THAT?!
GAROGA: WOLF FANG-OVER-FANG'S SPIN IS SO FAST THAT WE LOSE OUR FIELD OF VISION.
IT'S A VIOLENT ULTRA-ROTATION.

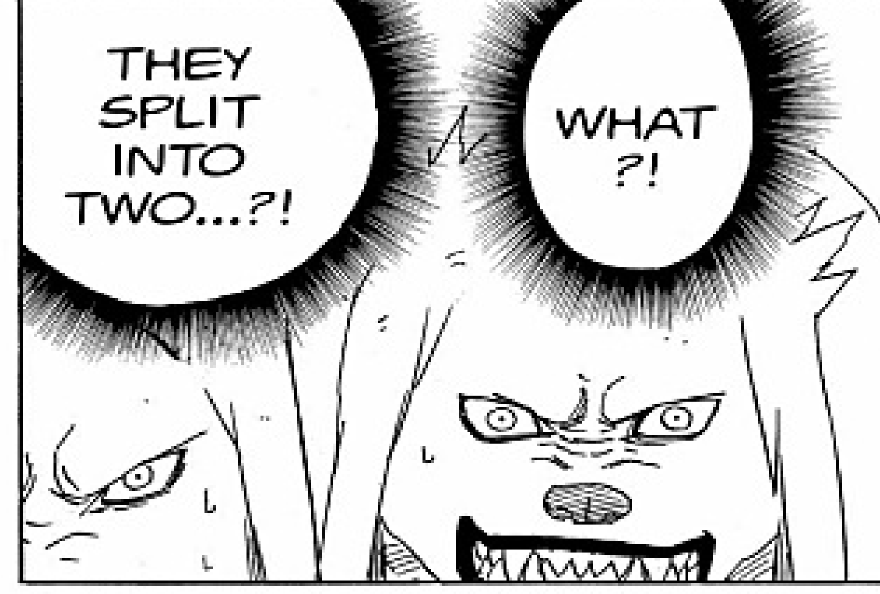

EVEN IF IT'S NOT A DIRECT HIT, YOU'RE STILL CUT DOWN...
IF YOU TAKE IT FULL BLAST, YOU GET SMASHED.


READ THIS WAY

?!
?!
SHUU
SHUU
SHUU
CLOMP
CLOMP
FUMP
?!!

WHATEVER... WE WERE JUST THINKING ABOUT SPLITTING UP TO FINISH YOU OFF.

CLOMP






NOW THE REAL FIGHT BEGINS.
UH-OH ...!!
WOOF!
YEAH... I KNOW, AKAMARU... WE CAN ONLY USE GAROGA ONCE MORE...
CRUNCH
THIS HAS TO END IT!!
TAK
WHREE
GAROGA! WOLF FANG-OVER-FANG!!

WHIRRRRR

FSSH

FSSH

ZOOM

SHH

SHH

ZOOM

SHIP

I TOLD YOU, WE'RE NOT FOLLOW-ING YOU WITH OUR EYES!

NO USE HIDING!!

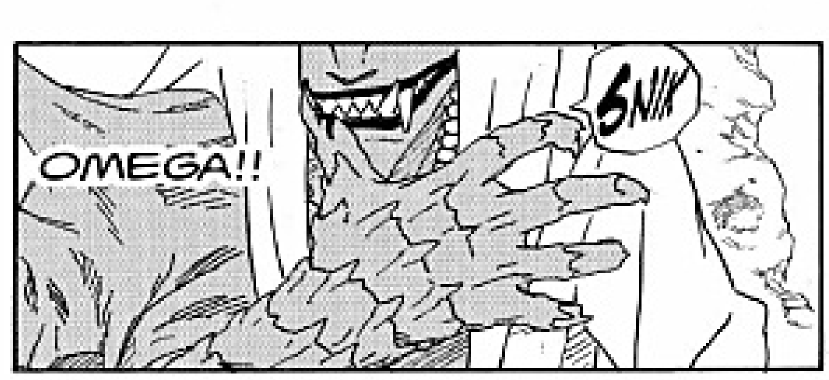
WE'RE FOLLOWING OUR NOSES...

AND ATTACKING BY TRACKING YOUR SCENT EVER SINCE WE MARKED YOU.

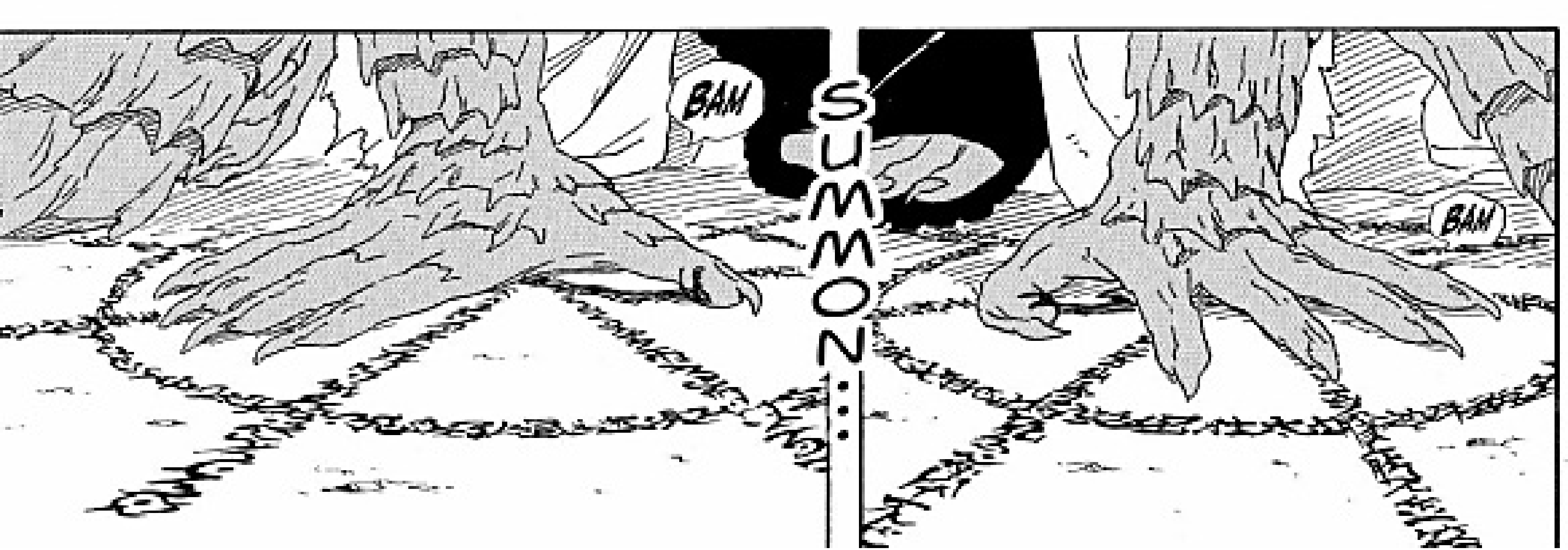
ZAP

ALPHA!

SNIK



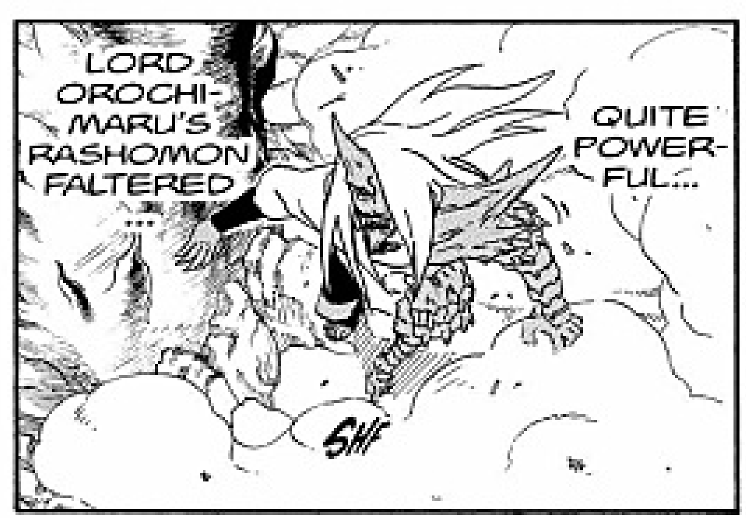




RASHOMON!!!



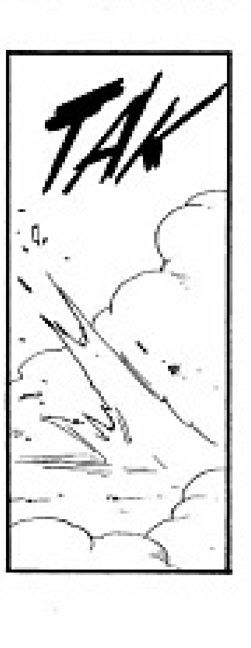
WHAM
!!


LORD OROCHIMARU'S RASHOMON FALTERED...
QUITE POWERFUL...
SHF


...
WHOMP


TAK


HOWEVER... HEH HEH...

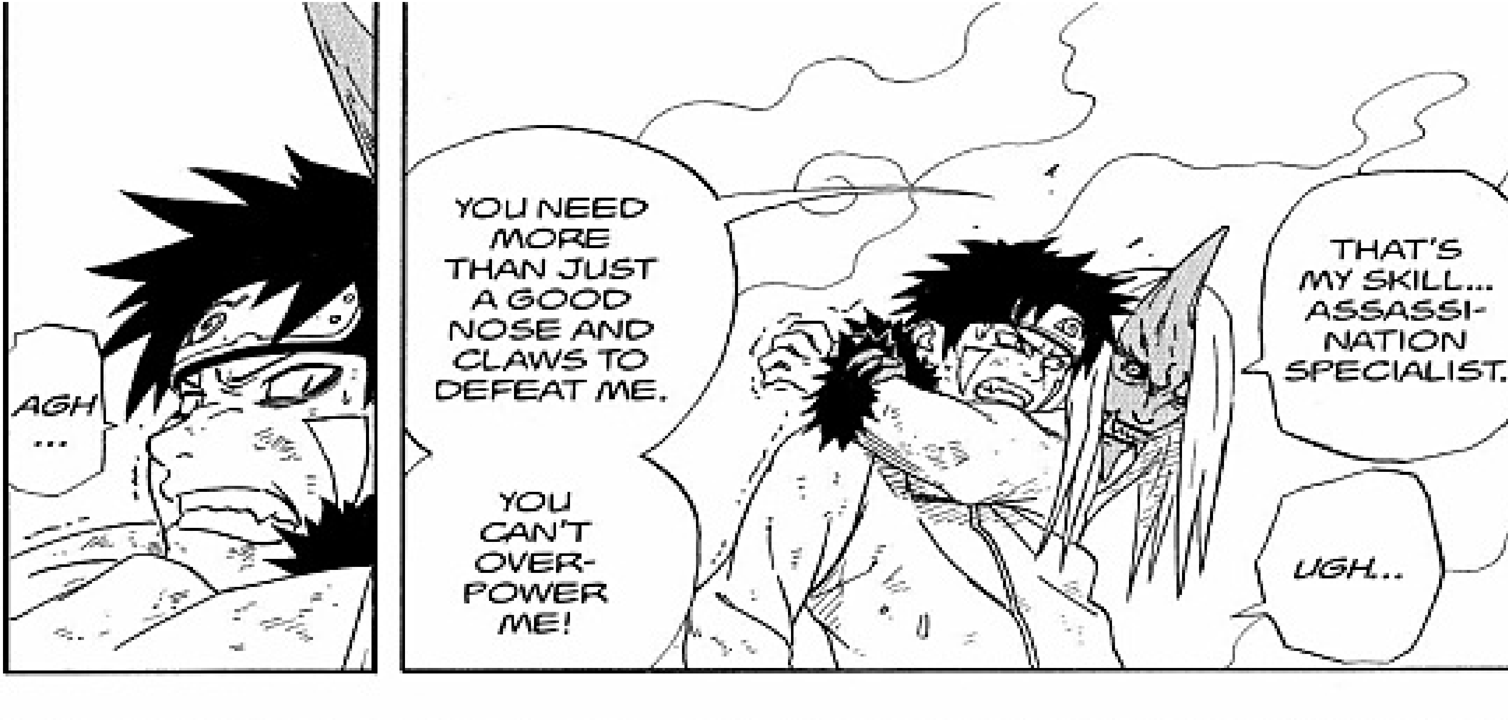

TAK

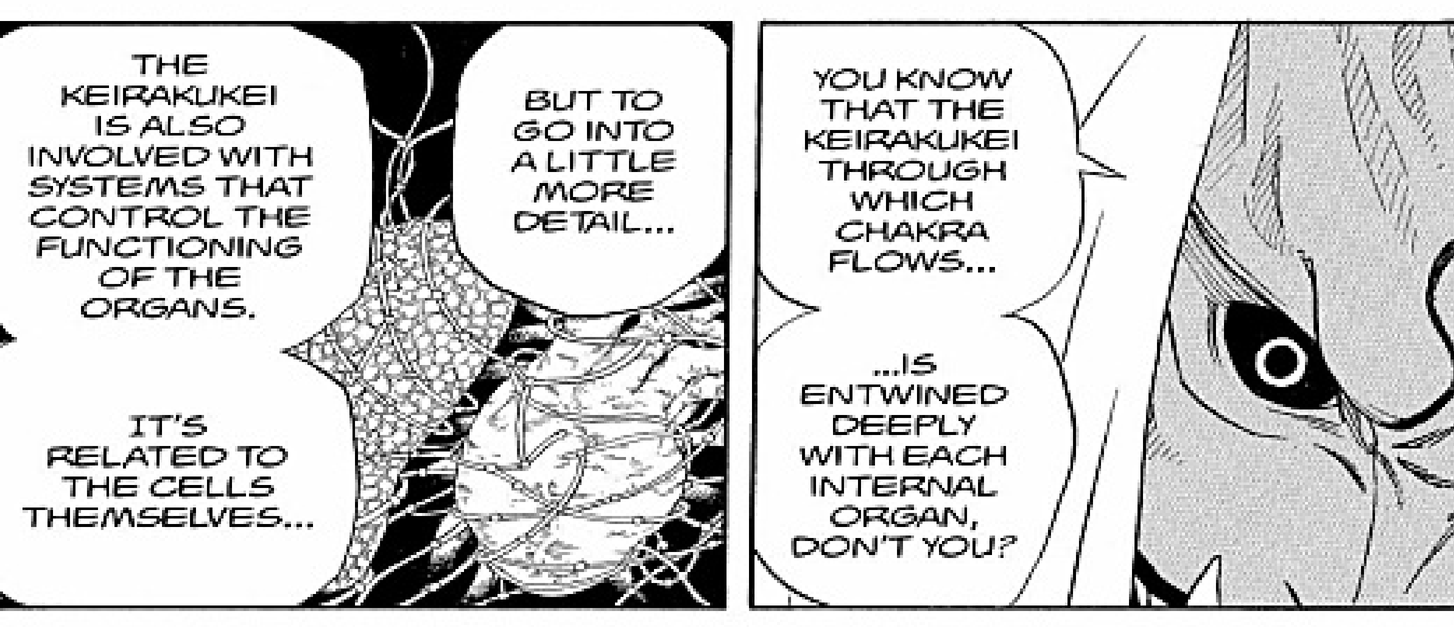

AKA-MARU!!
WHAM
!!
GLARE
TAK
NO!
ARGH! HE DID IT AGAIN ...!!
UNH. GAAAH... MY EYES...
!!

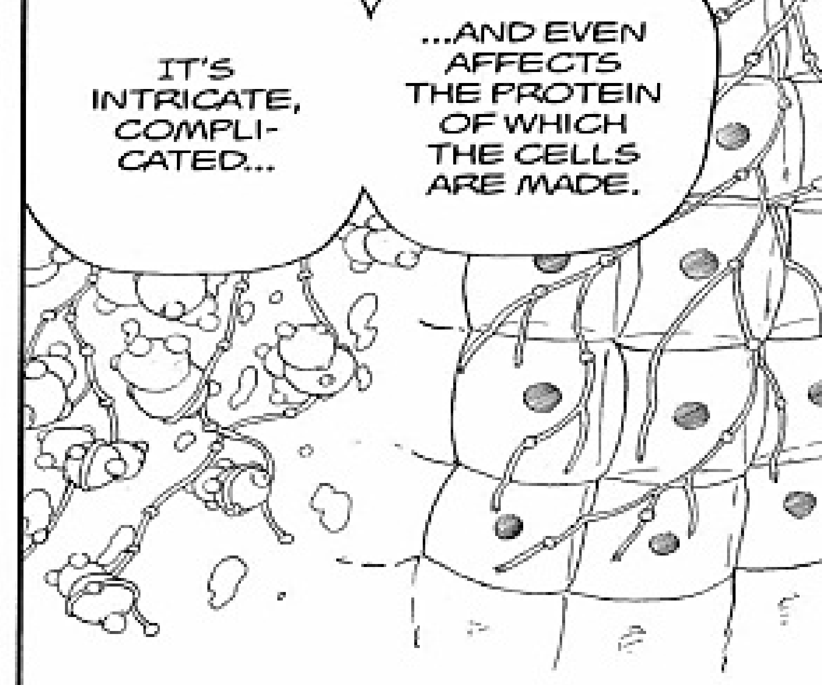

THIS IS THE END!!
FWU
TH
UD
AKAMARU, YOU... TOOK THE BLOW FOR ME...
?!
WHERE'S THE OTHER ONE?!
UGH... NGH...


SHUU
LOOKING FOR SOMEONE?


YOU... UKON! YOU USED ME AS A SHIELD?!
ARGH...! IT BURNS... IT'S LIKE ACID IN MY EYES...
I'LL HANDLE IT FROM HERE.
RINSE YOUR EYES IN THE RIVER.
TSK...
TAK
...
SHUP
FWIP
?!
GRAB
ZHUU
SHUU
ACK
SHUU

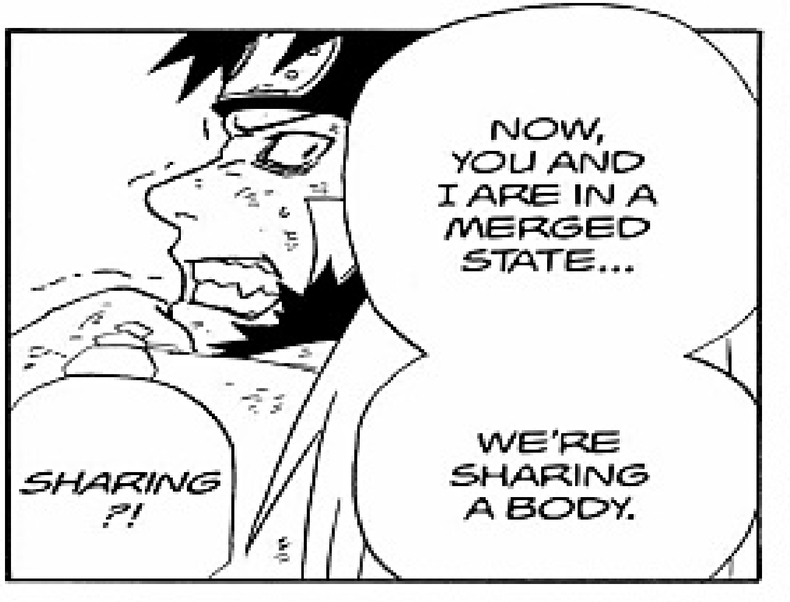

THAT'S MY SKILL... ASSASSI-NATION SPECIALIST.
UGH...
YOU NEED MORE THAN JUST A GOOD NOSE AND CLAWS TO DEFEAT ME.
YOU CAN'T OVER-POWER ME!
AGH ...

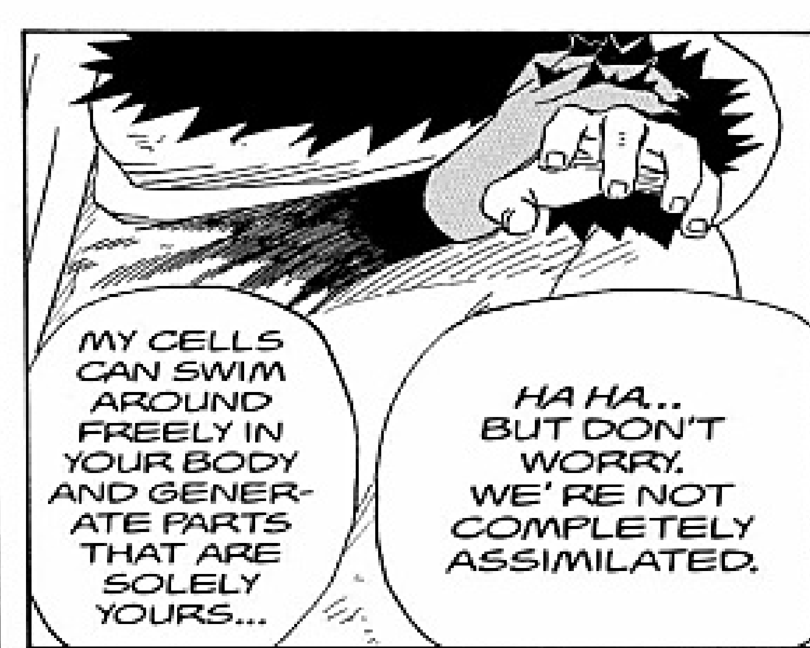

YOU KNOW THAT THE KEIRAKUKEI THROUGH WHICH CHAKRA FLOWS...
...IS ENTWINED DEEPLY WITH EACH INTERNAL ORGAN, DON'T YOU?
BUT TO GO INTO A LITTLE MORE DETAIL...
THE KEIRAKUKEI IS ALSO INVOLVED WITH SYSTEMS THAT CONTROL THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANS.
IT'S RELATED TO THE CELLS THEMSELVES...

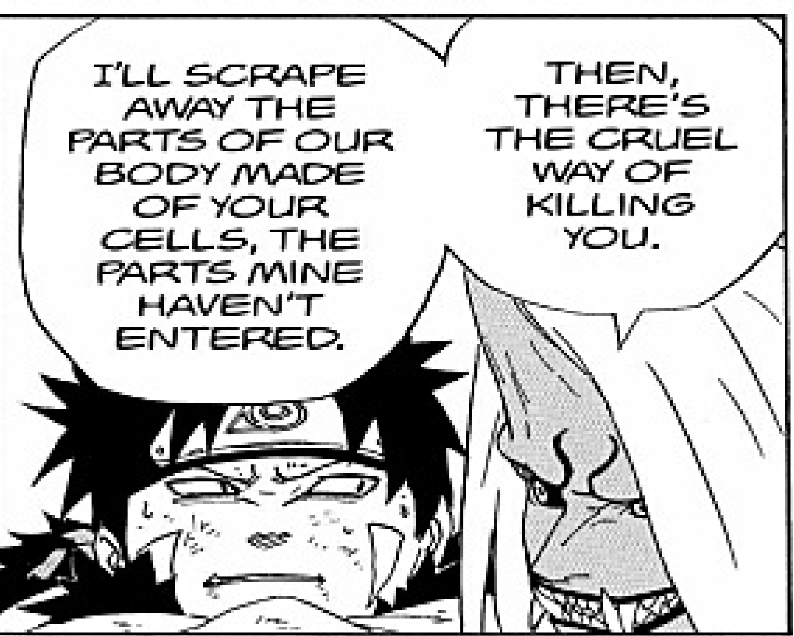

...AND EVEN AFFECTS THE PROTEIN OF WHICH THE CELLS ARE MADE.
IT'S INTRICATE, COMPLI-CATED...


IN SECOND STATE...
...I CAN DISSOLVE AND REFORM THOSE CELLS AND PROTEINS AT WILL USING CHAKRA.


TO PUT IT SIMPLY, I BREAK MY BODY INTO PIECES AND ENTER AN ENEMY'S BODY.
THEN I CAN RESTORE MY BODY AND COME OUT.


NOW, YOU AND I ARE IN A MERGED STATE...
WE'RE SHARING A BODY.
SHARING ?!


HA HA... BUT DON'T WORRY. WE'RE NOT COMPLETELY ASSIMILATED.
MY CELLS CAN SWIM AROUND FREELY IN YOUR BODY AND GENER-ATE PARTS THAT ARE SOLELY YOURS...

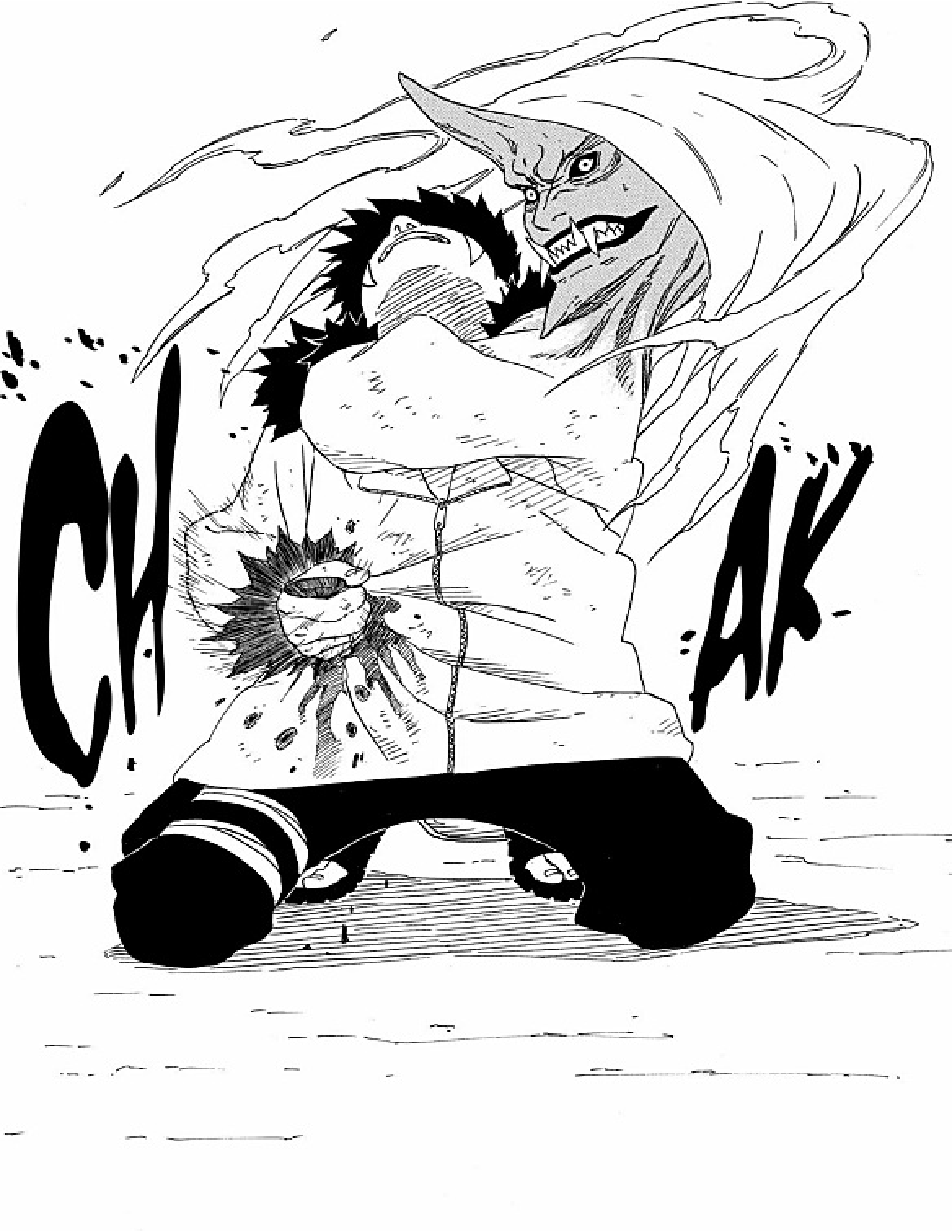

THEN, THERE'S THE CRUEL WAY OF KILLING YOU.
I'LL SCRAPE AWAY THE PARTS OF OUR BODY MADE OF YOUR CELLS, THE PARTS MINE HAVEN'T ENTERED.



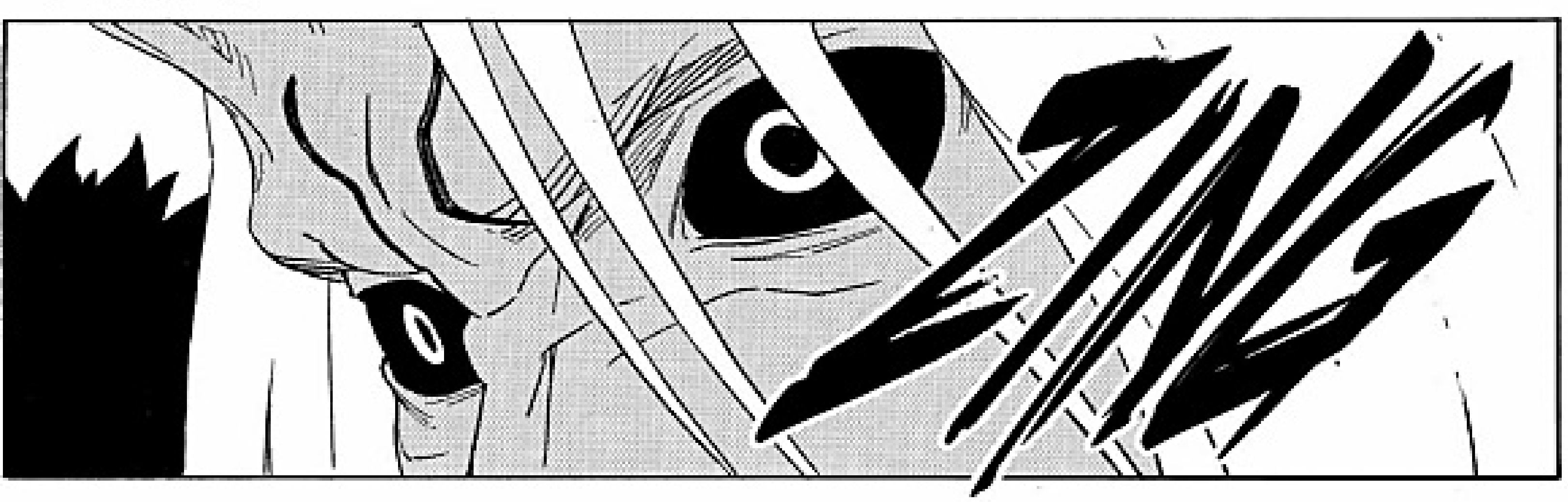

AND THEN...


SHUP


?!


CHAK





UGH... URK...

WHIRL WHIRL

HMPH... WHAT IF I... DO THIS?

HE'D SACRIFICE HIMSELF ...?!

IT CAN'T BE!!

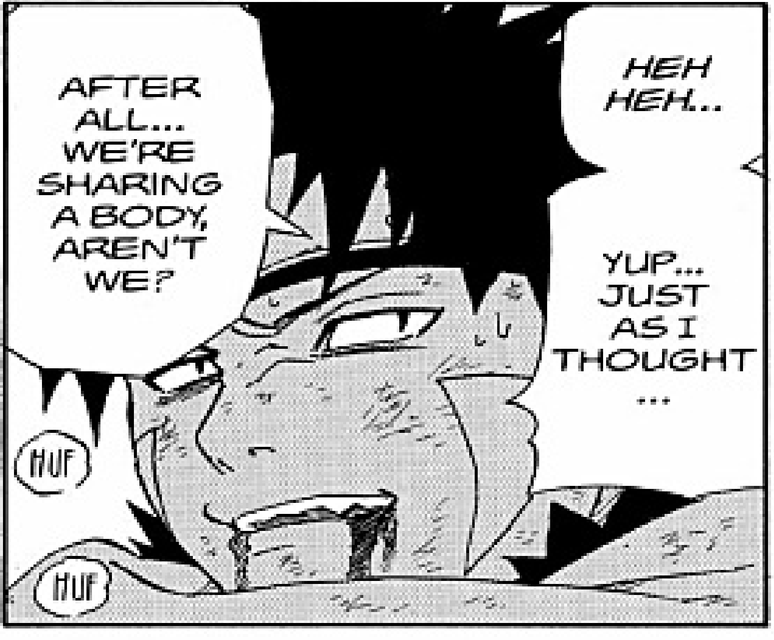



NARUTO
TM


Number 205: Kiba's Decision!!

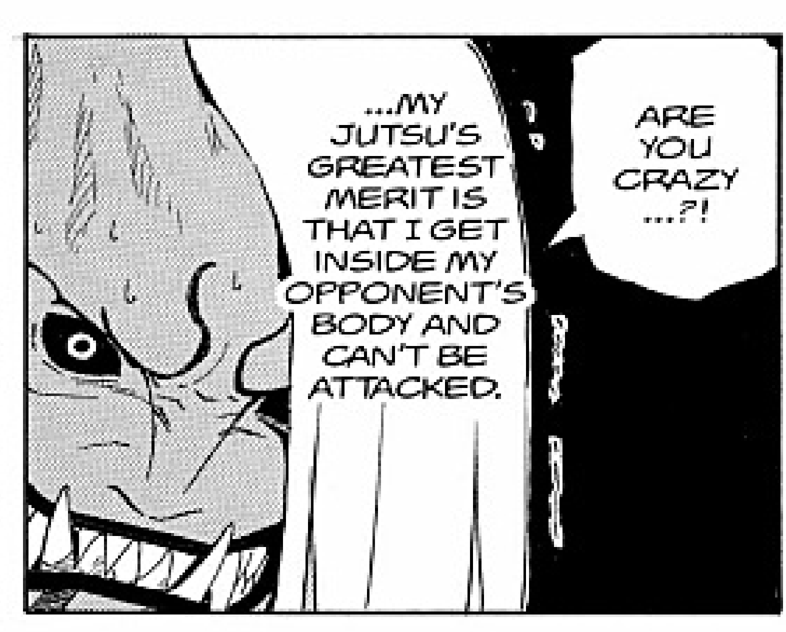
WHIRL
WHIRL
SPLEK!

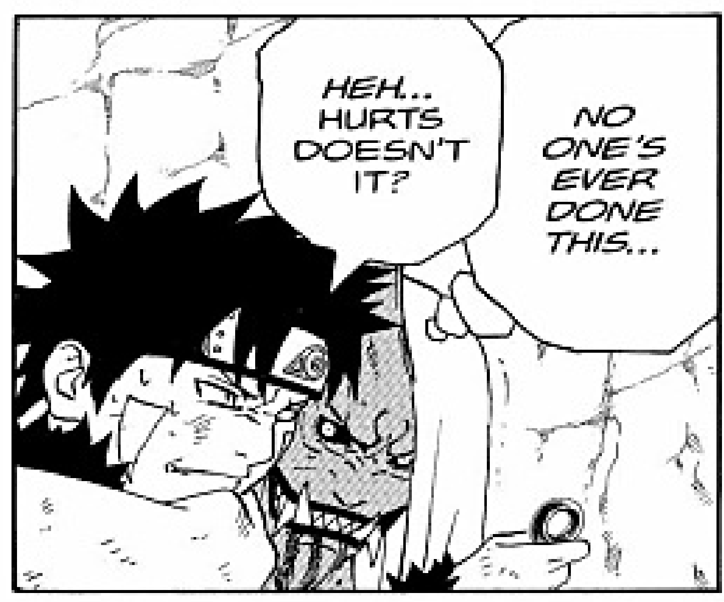


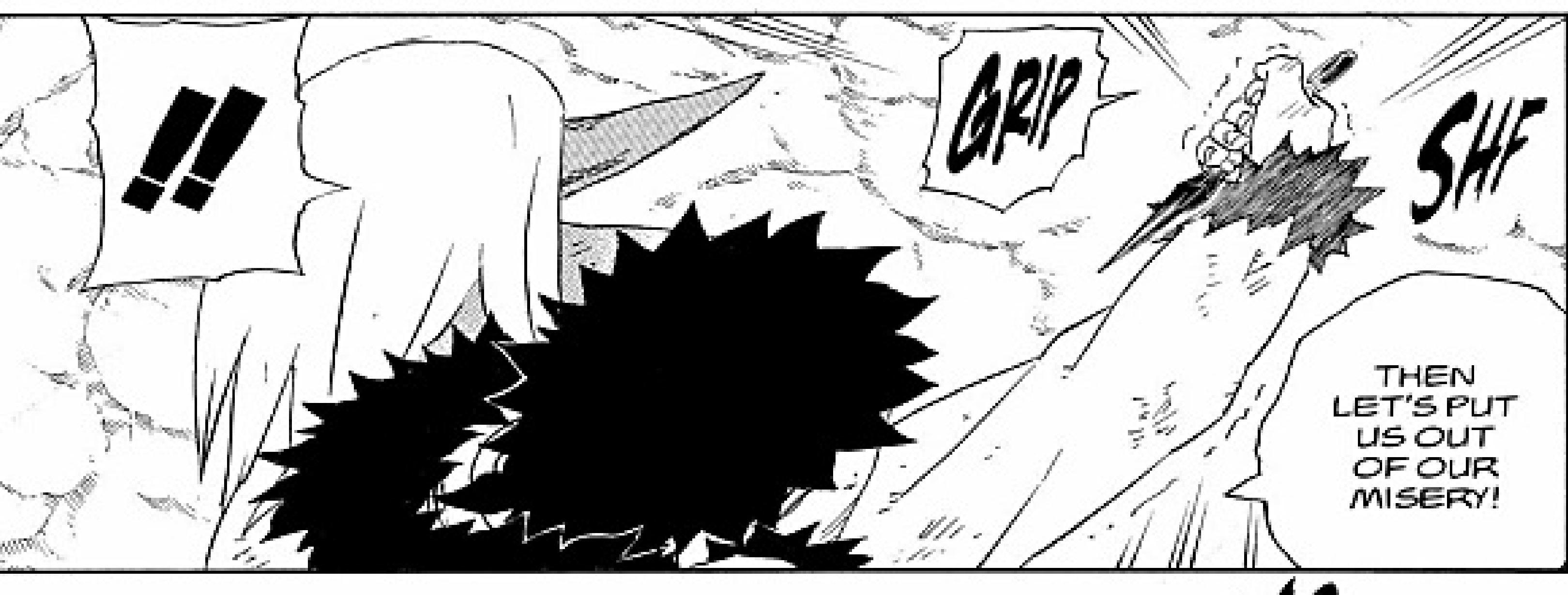




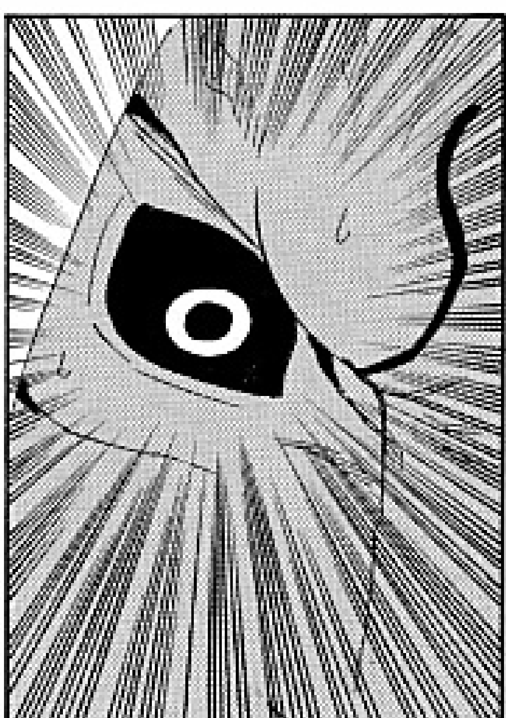

READ
THIS
WAY

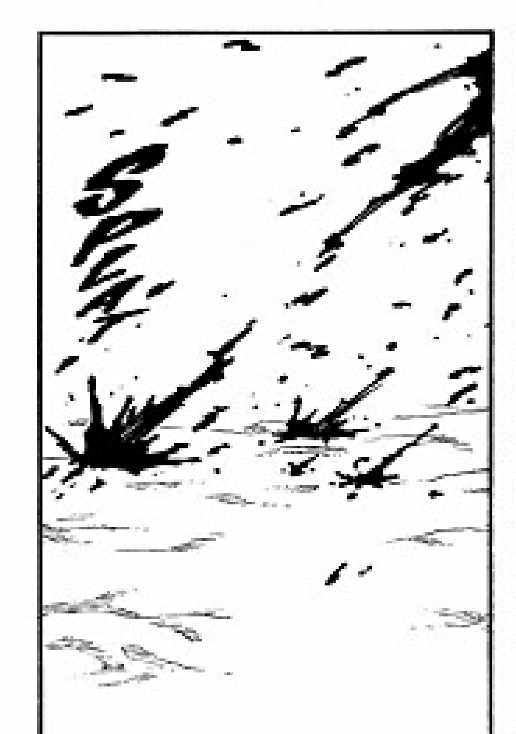

ARE YOU CRAZY ...?!
...MY JUTSU'S GREATEST MERIT IS THAT I GET INSIDE MY OPPONENT'S BODY AND CAN'T BE ATTACKED.


NO ONE'S EVER DONE THIS...
HEH... HURTS DOESN'T IT?


SHF
GRIP
THEN LET'S PUT US OUT OF OUR MISERY!
!!


SHUP

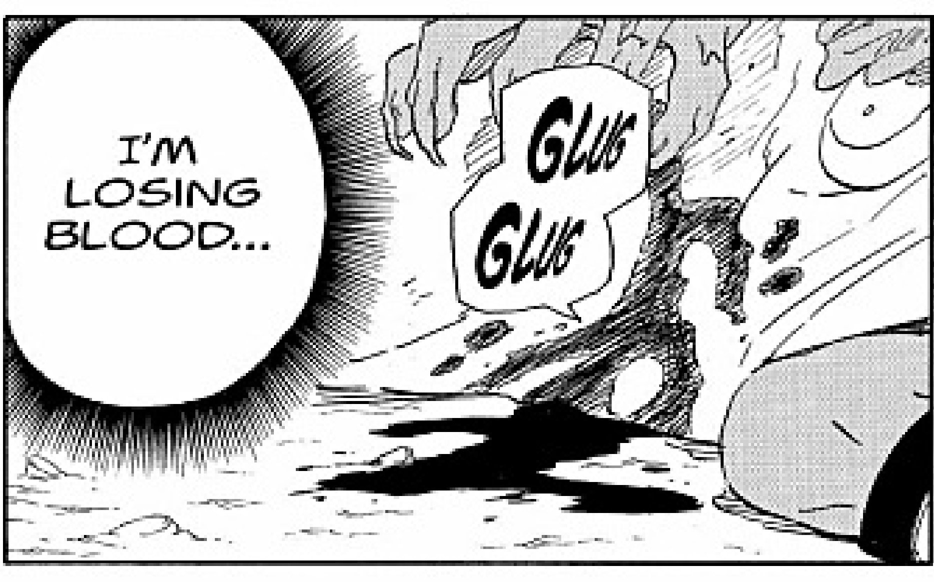



SPLAT

ZYUU

THUD



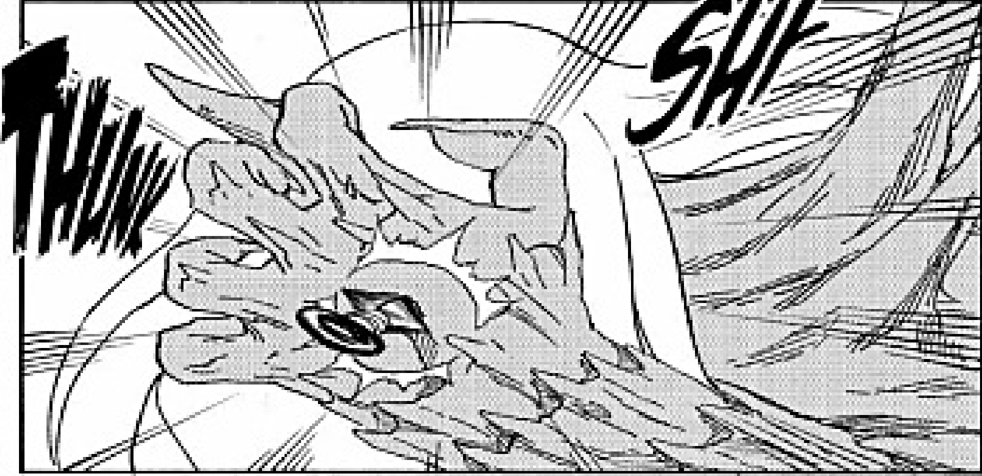



READ THIS WAY


ARGH...!
SHAK


FWUP


!

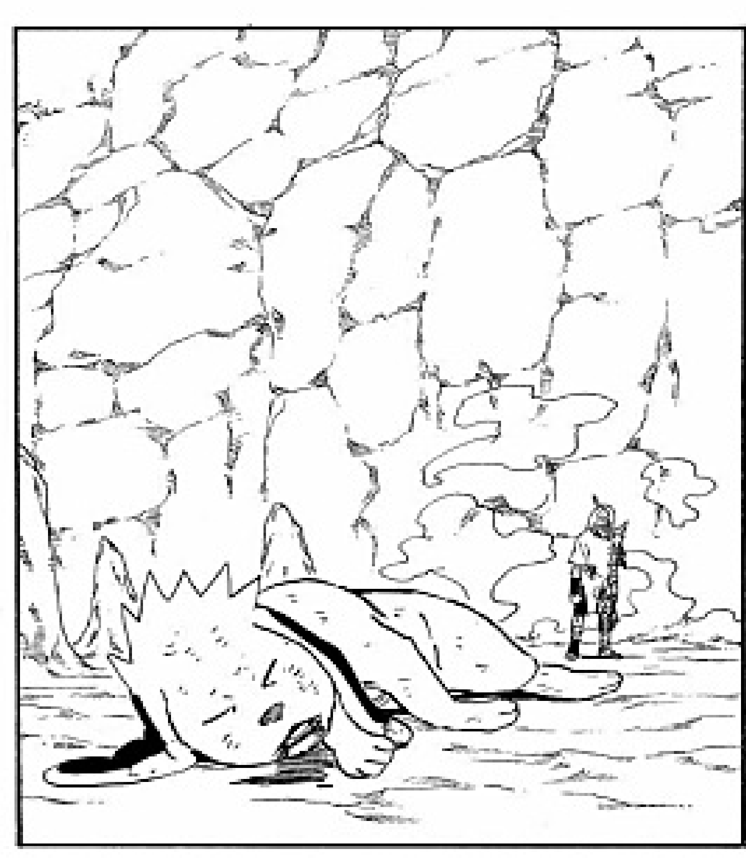

SHF
THUNK

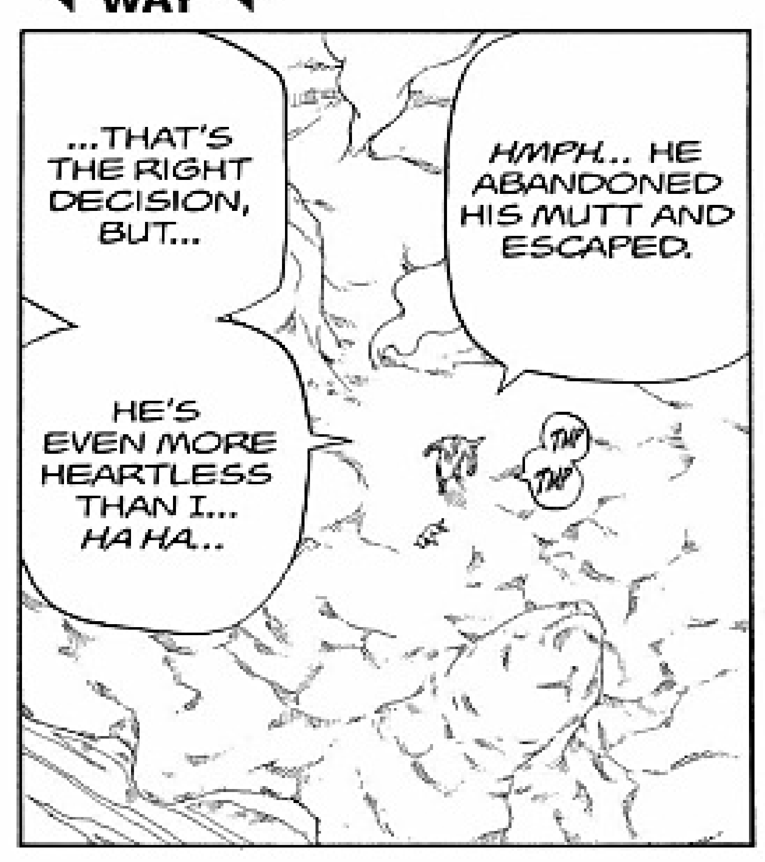

TSK!

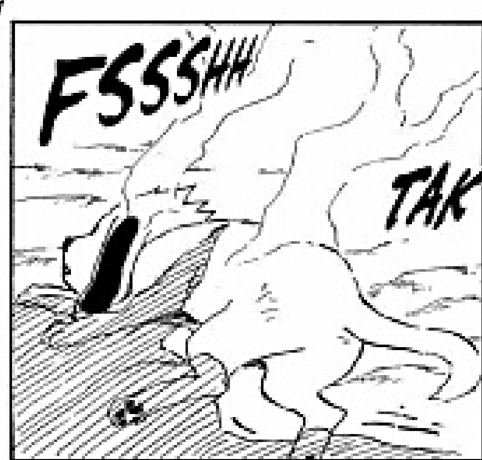

?!!


BOOF
A SMOKE BOMB?!
UGH!
!
BWAA
!
SHUP
SHUP
NO... WHERE DID HE GO...?


READ THIS WAY



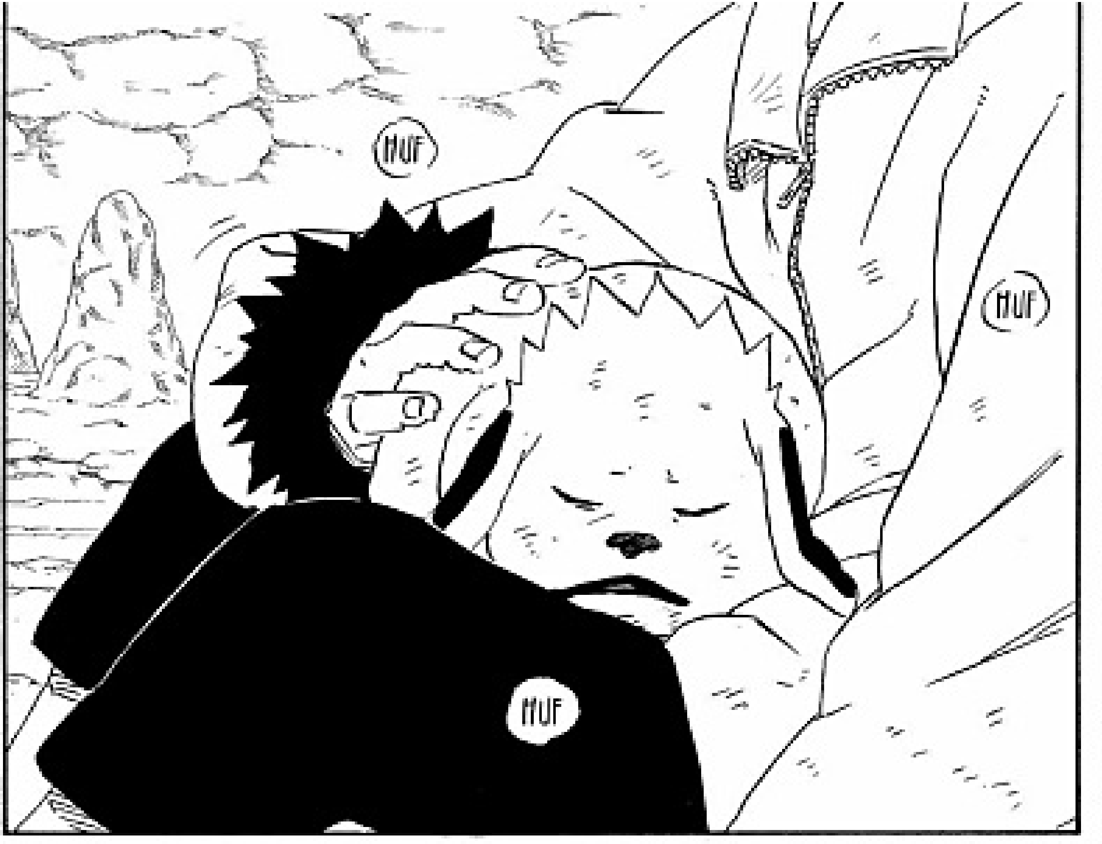
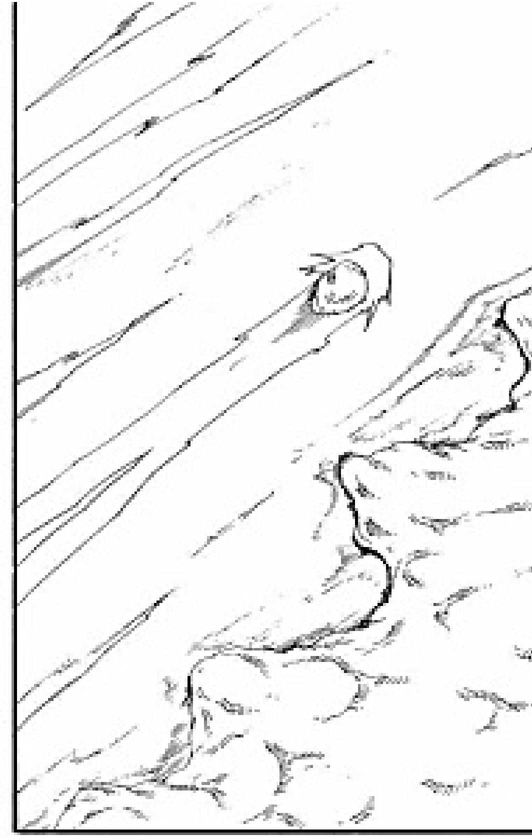
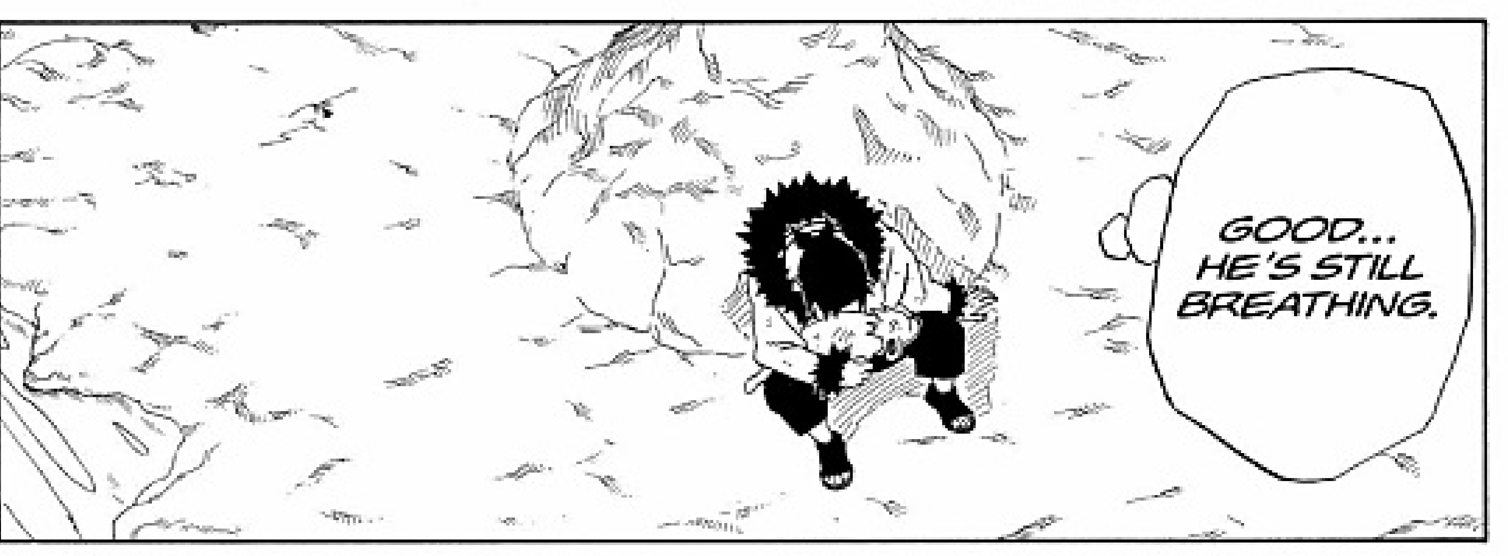

HMPH... HE ABANDONED HIS MUTT AND ESCAPED.
TMP TMP
...THAT'S THE RIGHT DECISION, BUT...
HE'S EVEN MORE HEARTLESS THAN I... HA HA..


FSSSHH
TAK


?!
OH, NO...!


PUFF


BLAM


HUF
HUF
HUF


GOOD... HE'S STILL BREATHING.

UNGH...!

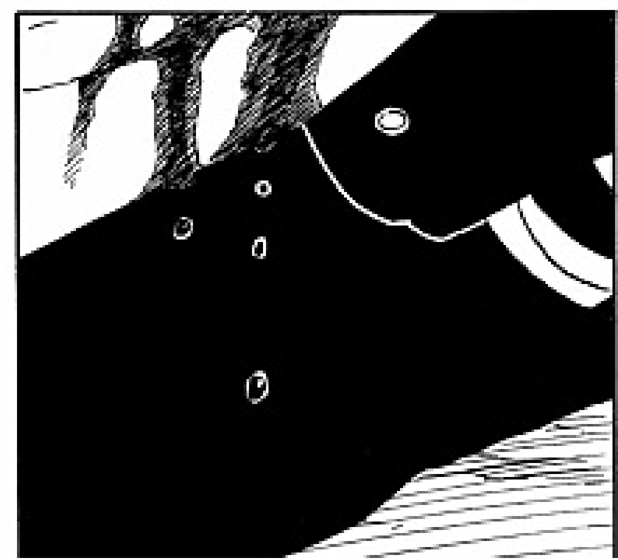

...
THANK GOOD-NESS...


READ THIS WAY

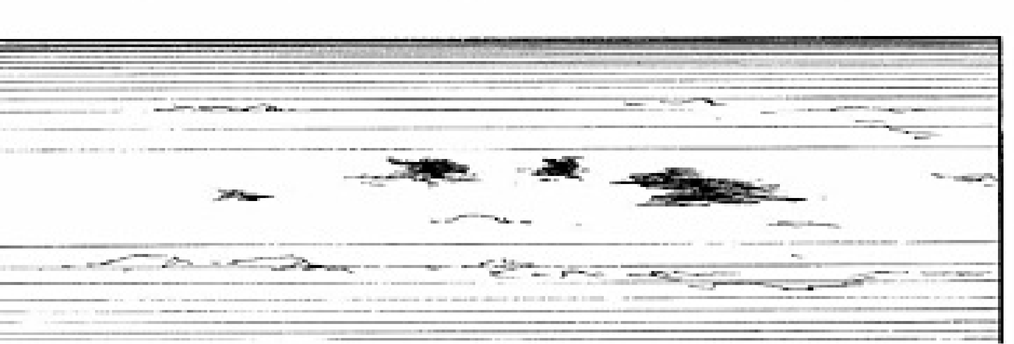

BA DUMP

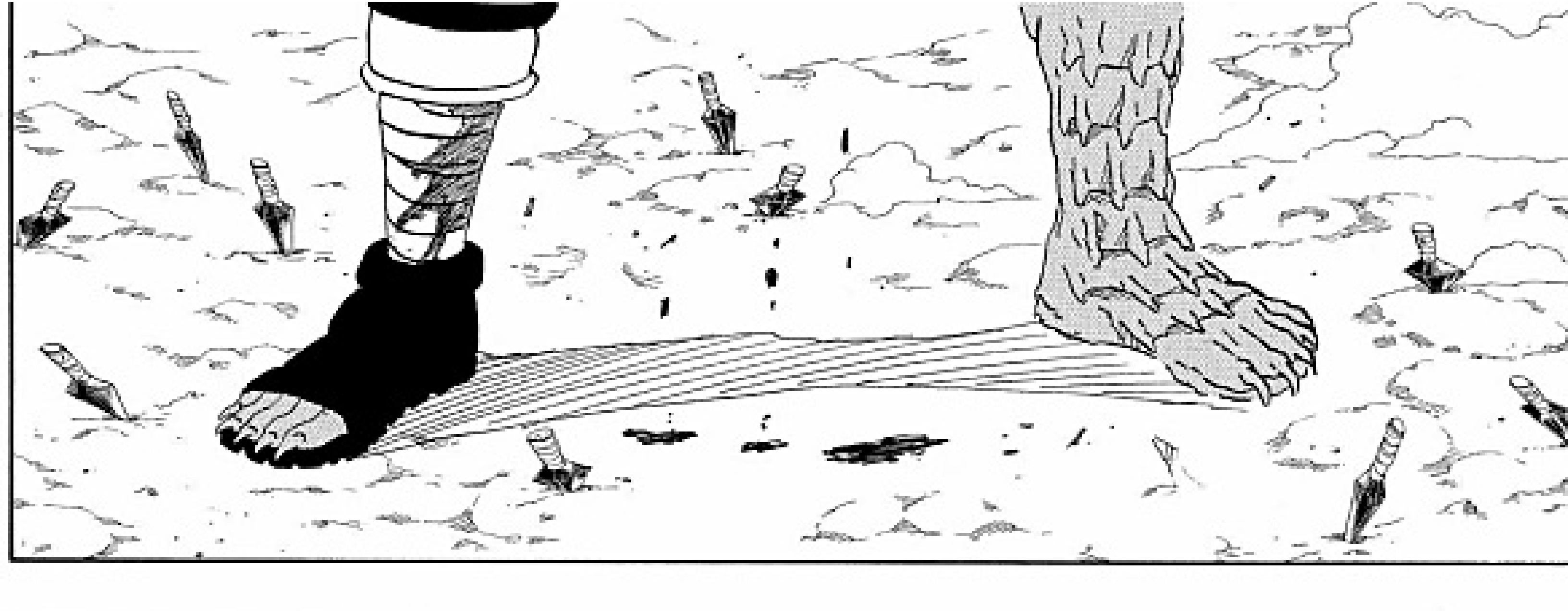

AKAMARU... YOU CAME THROUGH...
HUF
HUF
THANKS TO YOU, WE SLOWED 'EM DOWN PRETTY GOOD... EVEN WOUNDED THEM...

THAT'S ENOUGH... YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH...
...IT'S MY TURN TO PROTECT YOU...



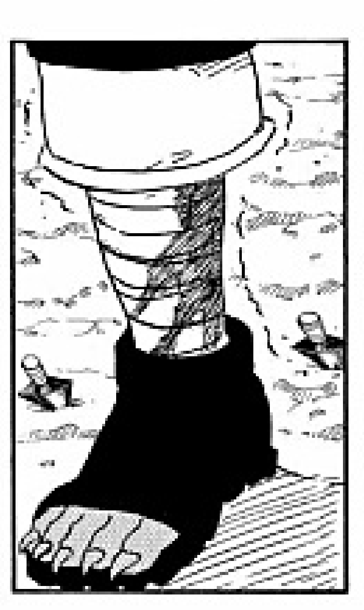

PLIP
PLIP





THEY SET A TRAP...
SNEAKY RATS...





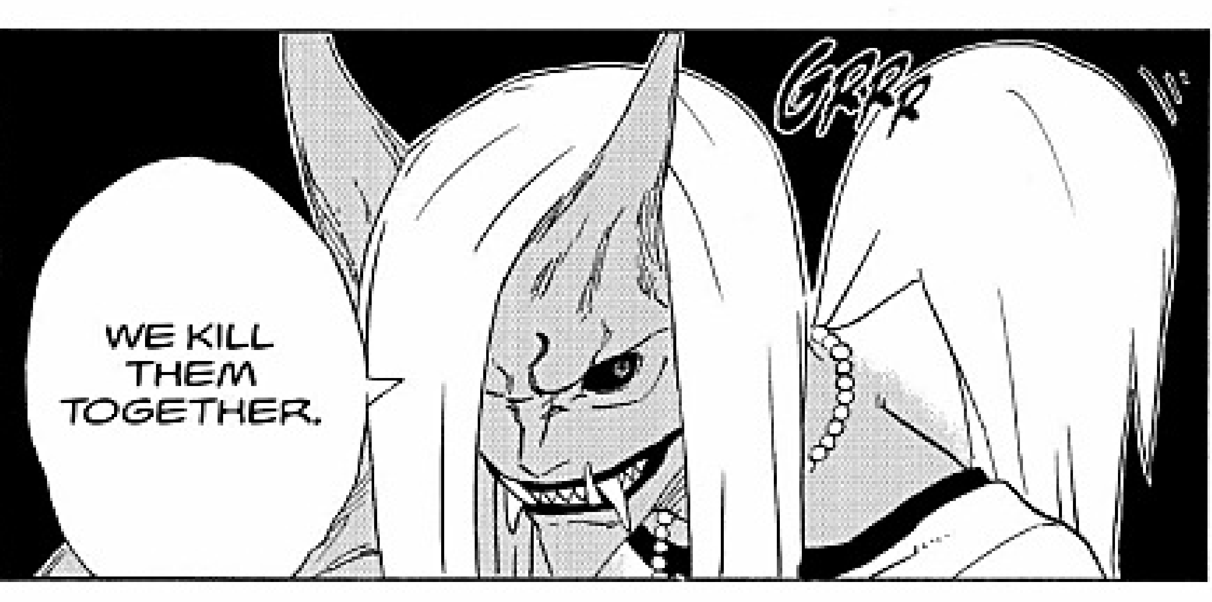


...
GRRR
THEY'RE DEAD!!
HEY! SAKON! WHERE ARE YOU?!
SAKON!!
CLOMP
!
SPLOSH
WHAT'RE YOU MAKING SUCH A FUSS ABOUT?
YOUR VOICE IS SO LOUD IT EVEN HURTS MY EYES...
!!

THEY STILL MUST DIE...
BUT IT'S TIME FOR MY REST...
CLOMP
CLOMP
KEEP THEM ALIVE!!








READ
THIS
WAY


BOOF




BEHOLD! YANAGI NO MAI! WILLOW DANCE!!
TAK


UGH!
AAUGH!
TAK
ZOOM

POP
AGH!
PO






THAK
THAK
POP
POP



YAAAAAH!!

BAM


BO
OF
ARGH!

A BONE ...?!

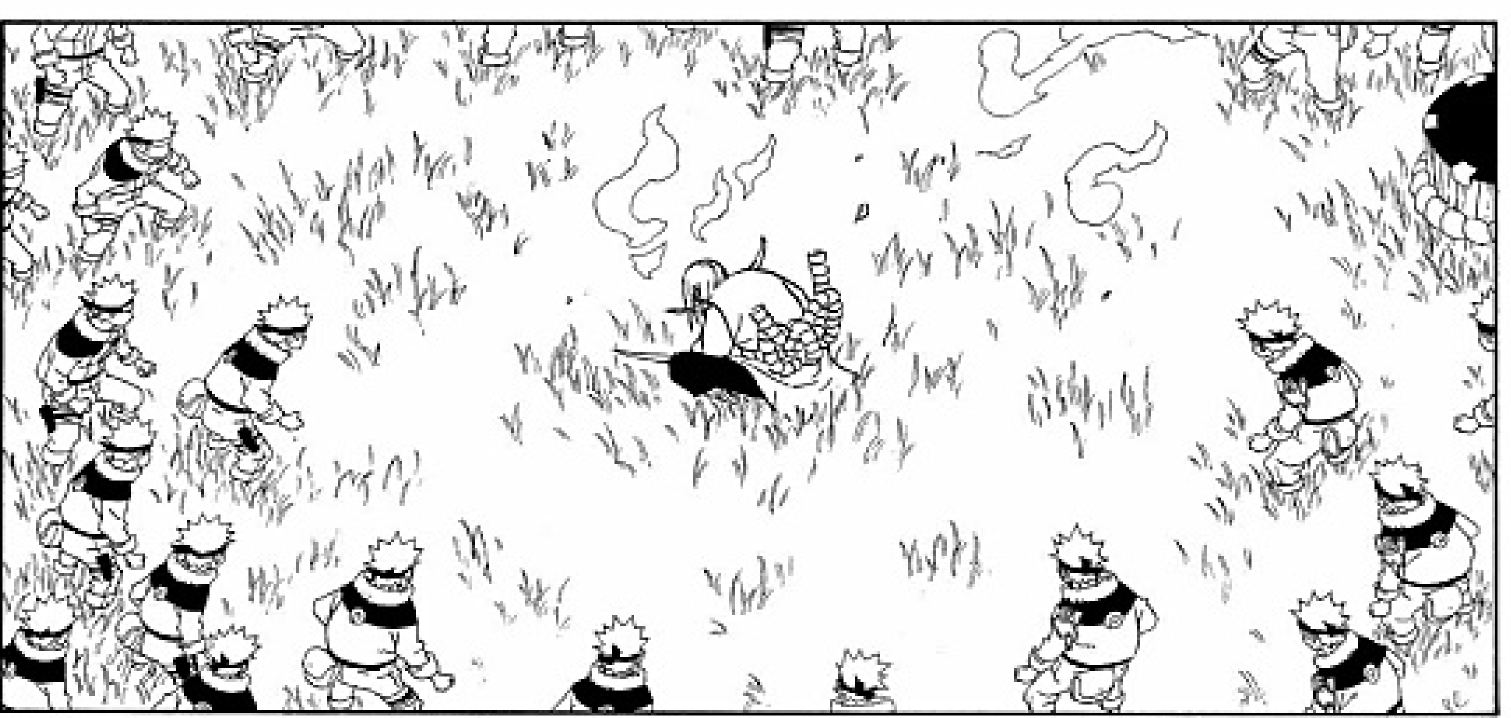
THA

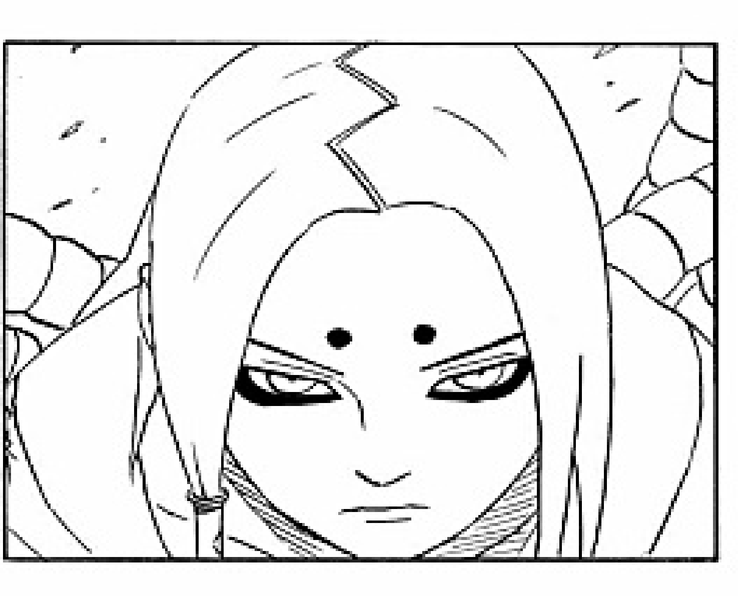
BOOF





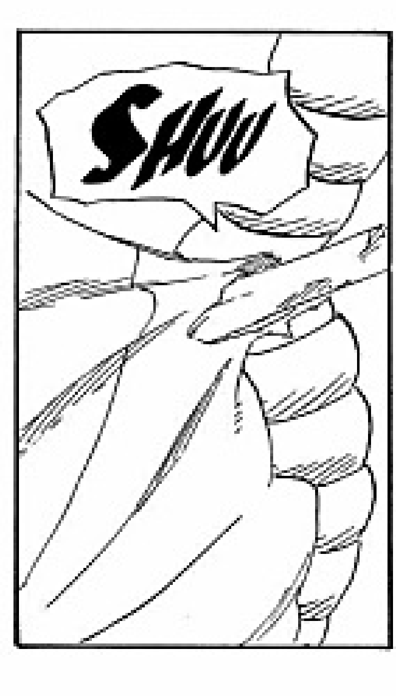

Number 206: Predicament…!!





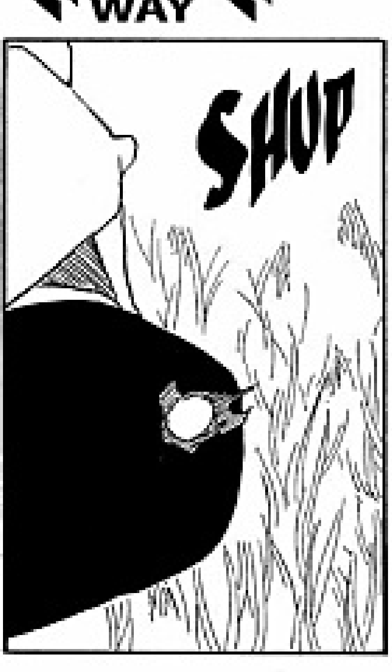

WHAT IS THIS GUY?! HE YANKED THOSE BONES OUT OF HIS OWN BODY?!


READ
THIS
WAY

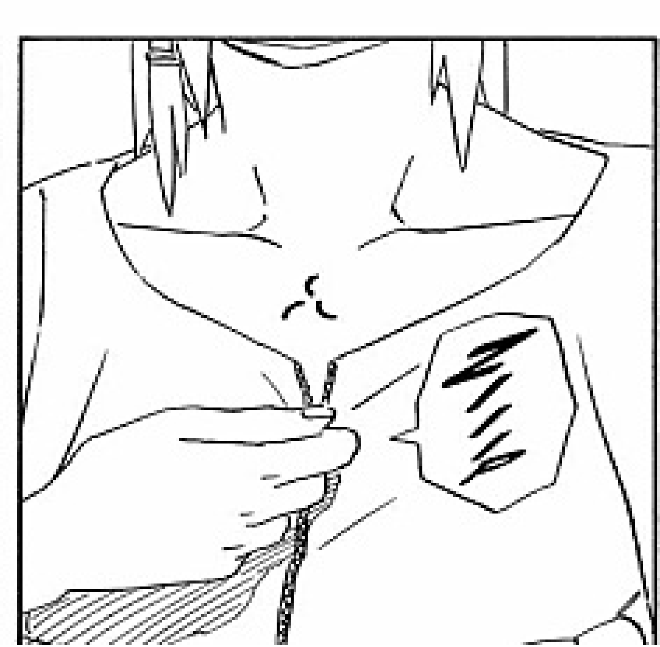

SHUU


SHUP


SHUU

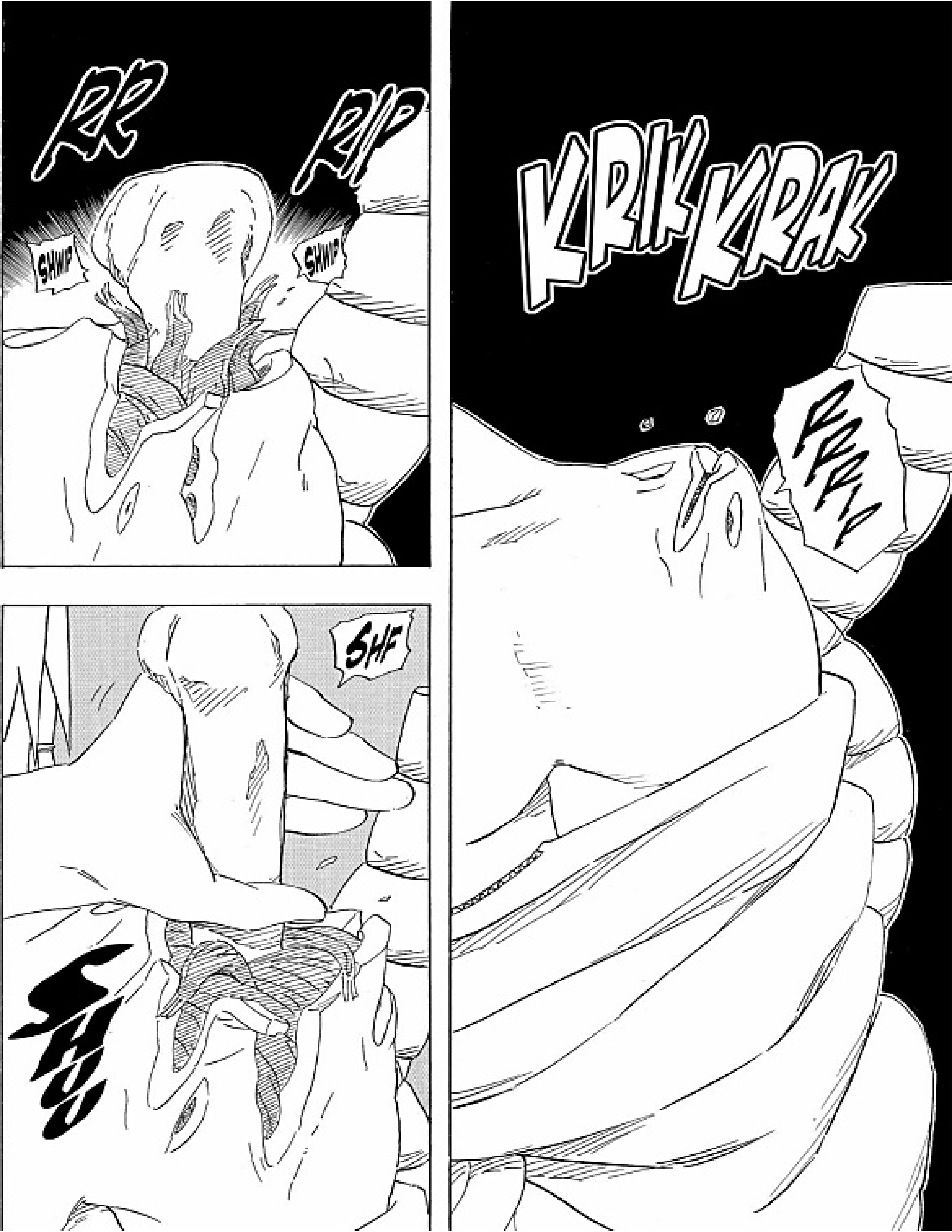

SHUP


SKF

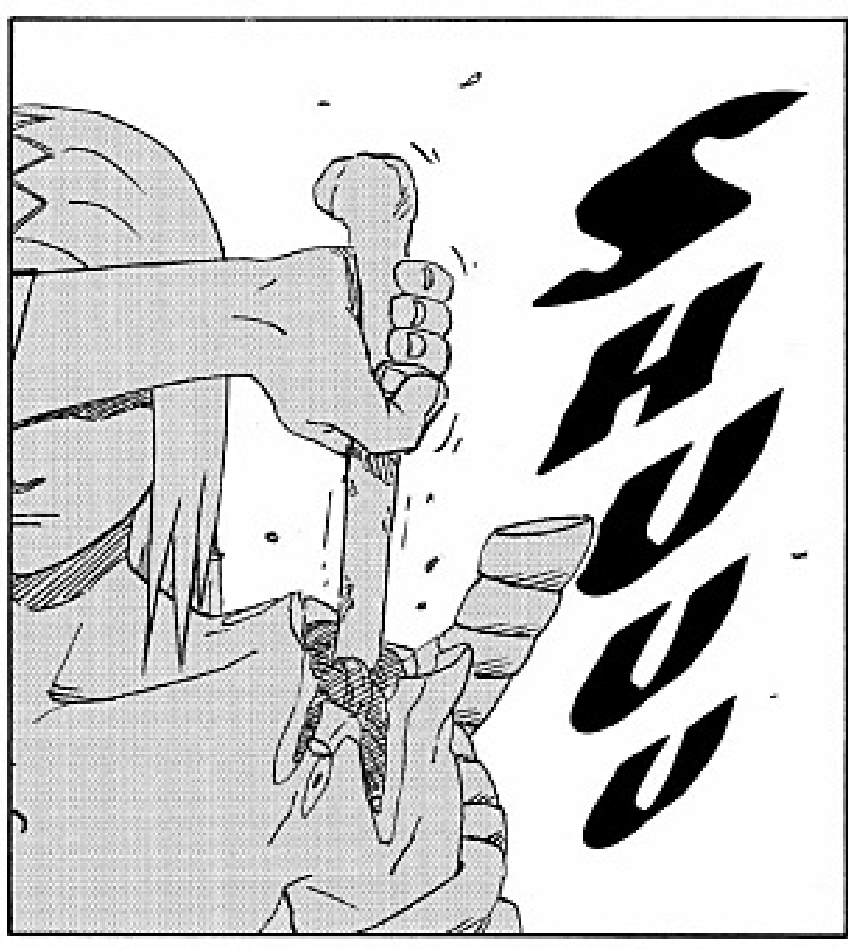



?!

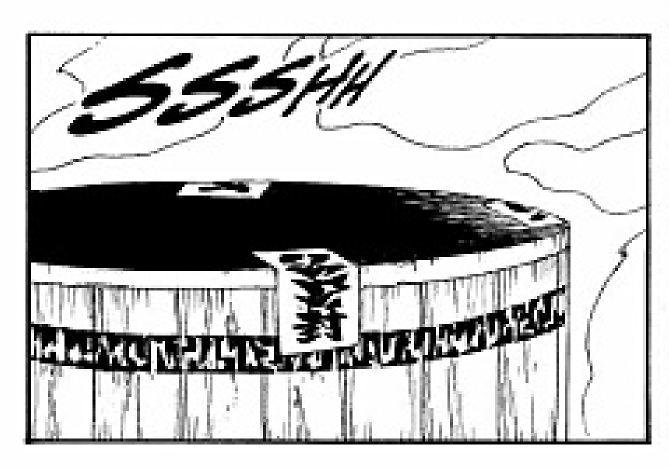

CRACK
SHF


KRIK KRAK
RIP
RIP
SHWIP
SHWIP
SHF


READ THIS WAY


SHUUU


?!
NO WAY... HE'S...

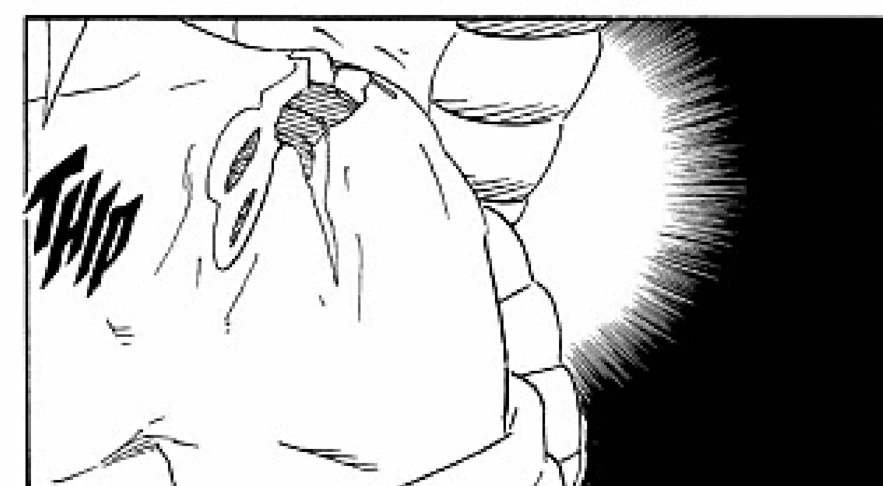

SSSHH


WON'T BE LONG NOW...


?!


SHU

SHUK


THIP


THIP



A BONE FOR A SWORD ...?

HIS WOUNDS HEALED...

SHFF

CLINK

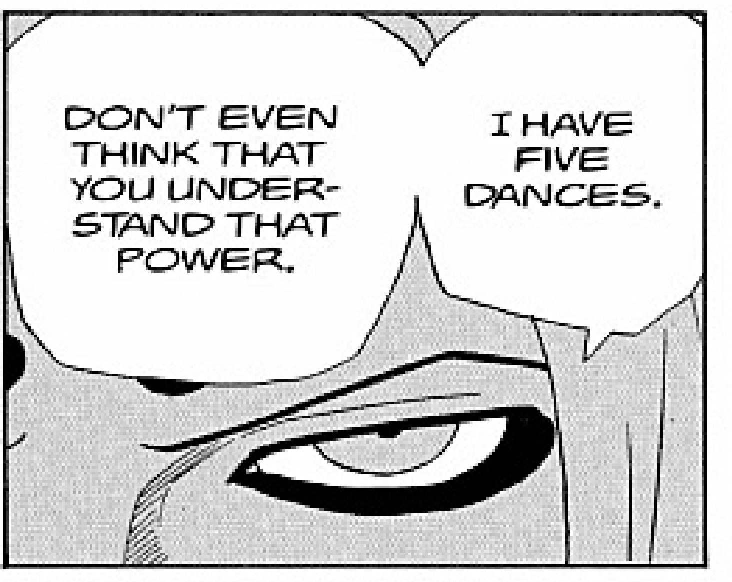
CHING

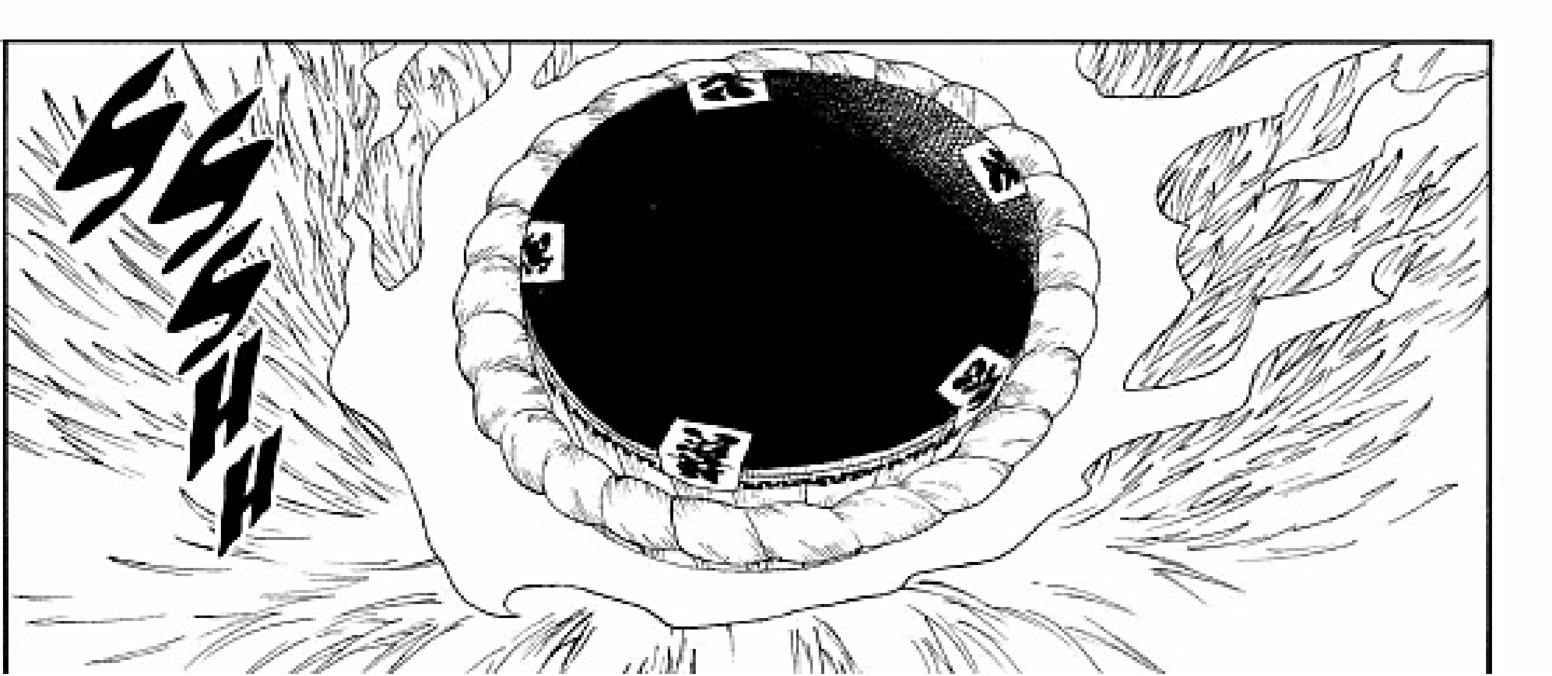
CHING

?!

THIS IS NO ORDINARY BONE...
IT'S MAXIMUM DENSITY, HARD AS STEEL.



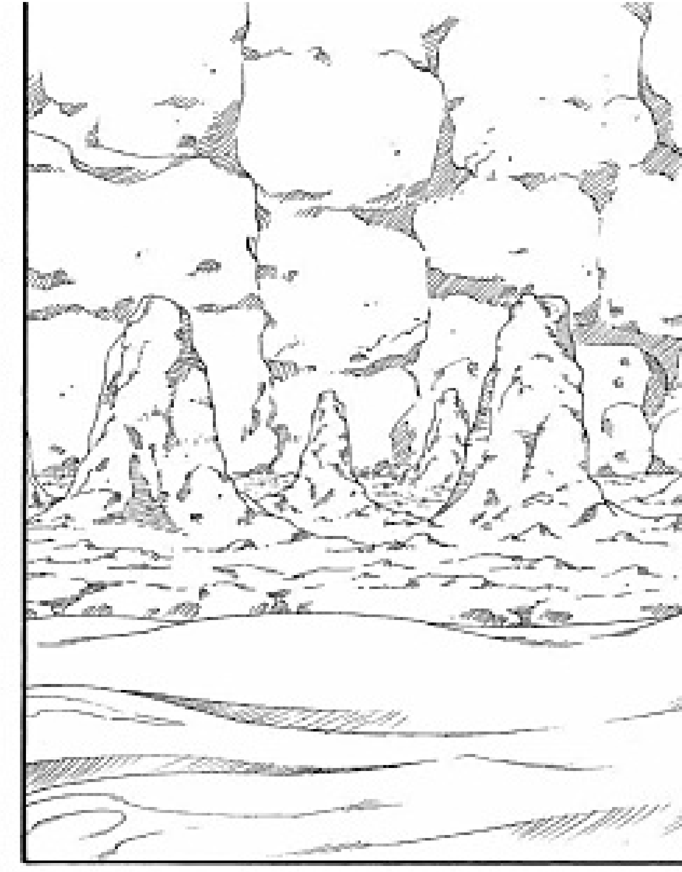


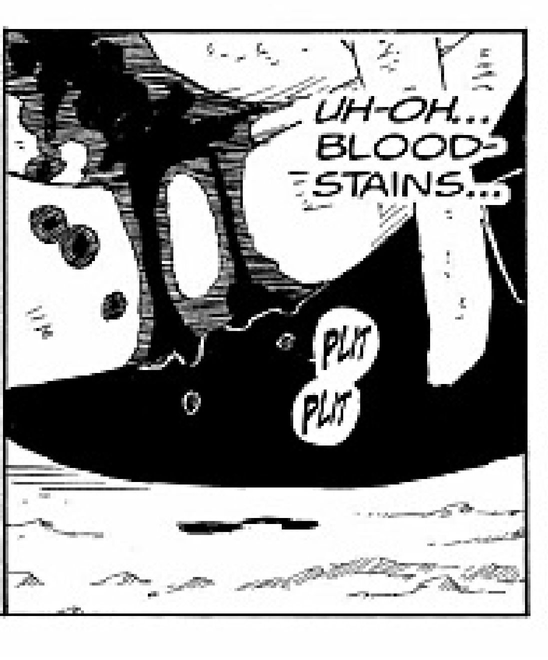
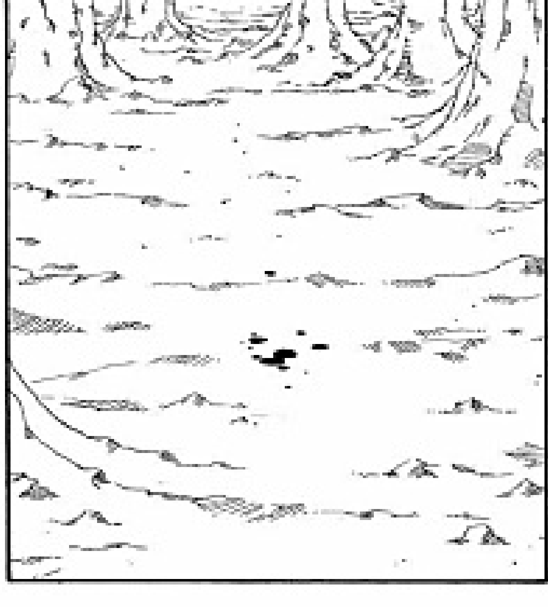


PARTI-CULARLY, THE NEXT ONE...

I'LL SHOW YOU TSUBAKI NO MAI! CAMELLIA DANCE!!

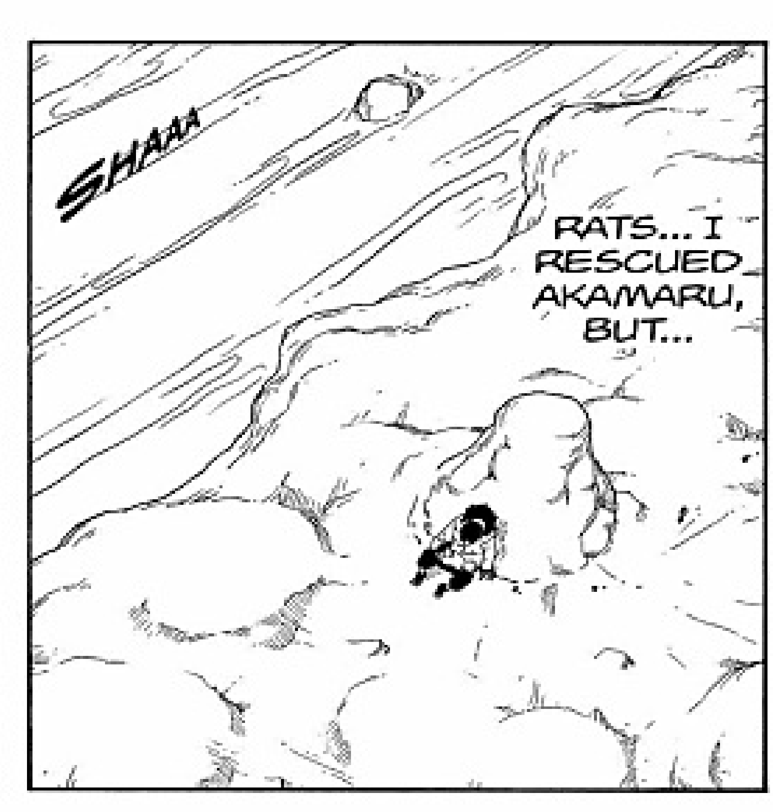
I'M GONNA CRUSH YOU!!

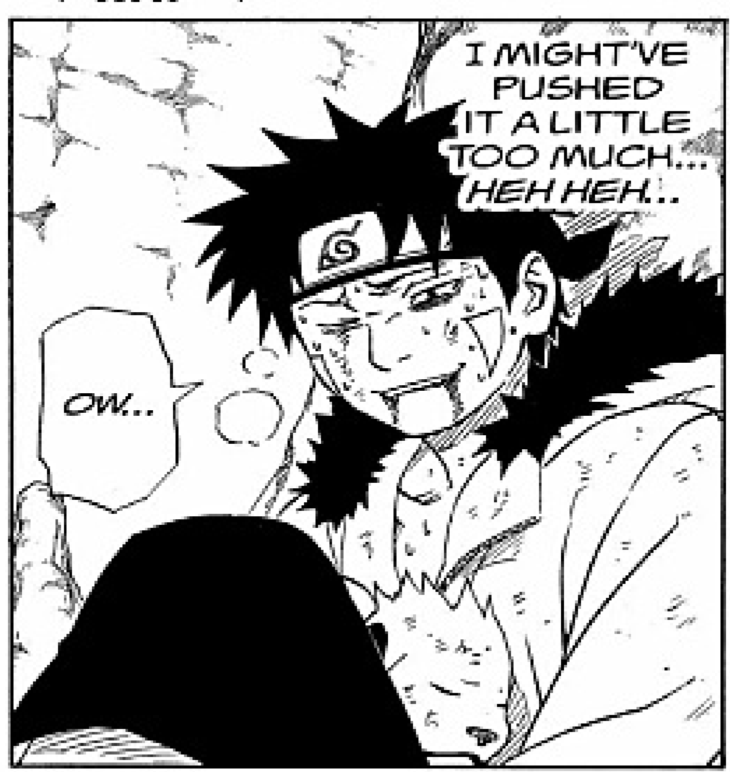



LITTLE BY LITTLE, THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER...

UH-OH... BLOOD-STAINS...
PLIT PLIT


...


READ THIS WAY


SHAAA
RATS... I RESCUED AKAMARU, BUT...


I MIGHT'VE PUSHED IT A LITTLE TOO MUCH... HEH HEH...
OW...


SIGH...


?!!


SNIF SNIF


THAT SMELL... WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WHY...? WHY ARE THEY COMING THIS WAY...?!

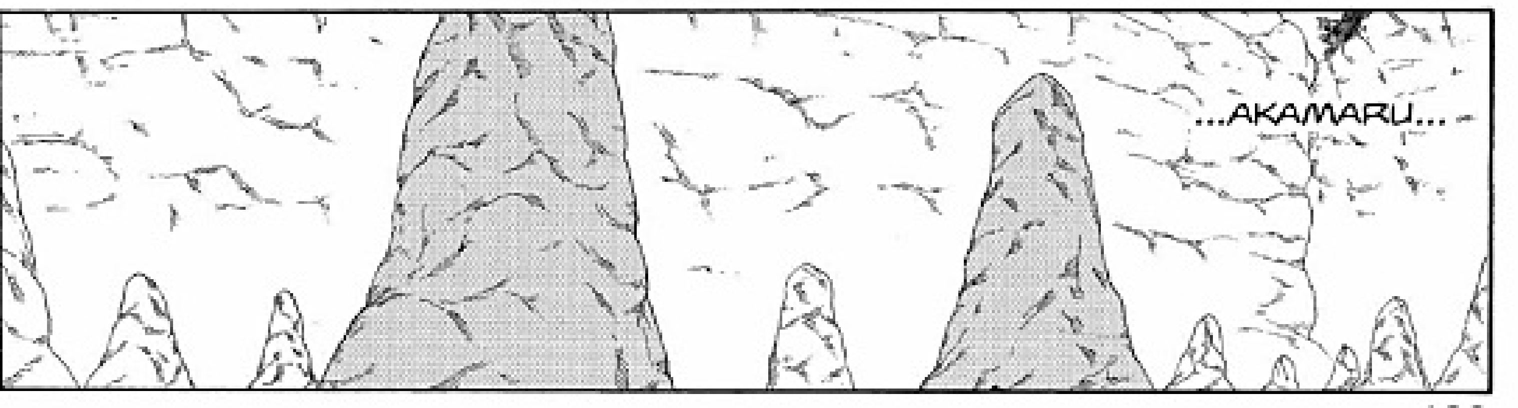

MAN... IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...
SKF
ANYWAY, I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE...


!!
ZING
UGH...

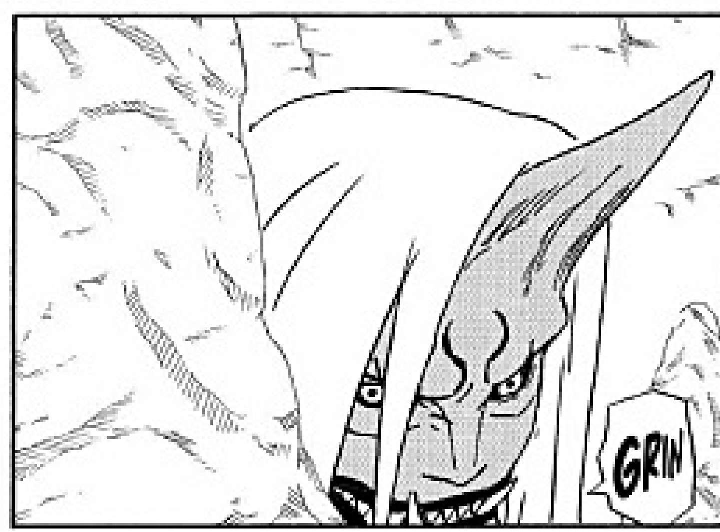

FWUMP

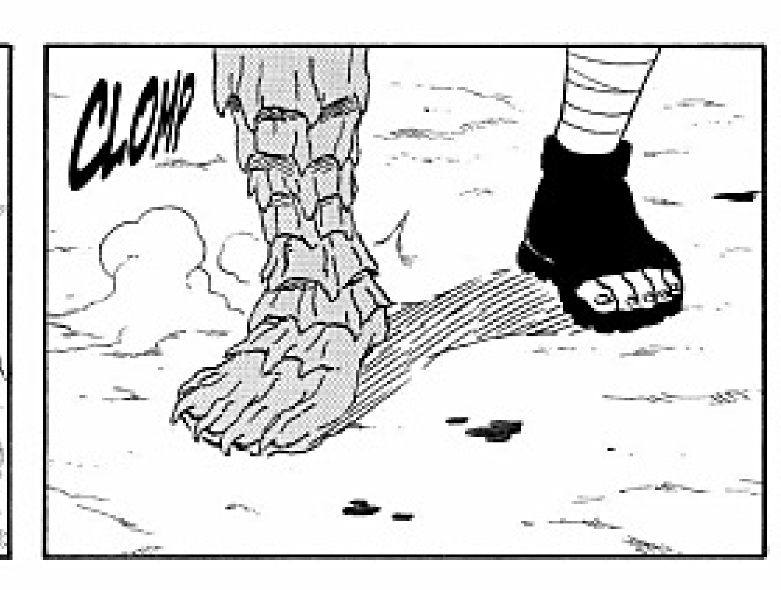

...
...NO GOOD... THE PAIN AND BLOOD LOSS ARE MAKING ME DIZZY. MY BODY... I CAN'T MOVE...
HUF
HUF

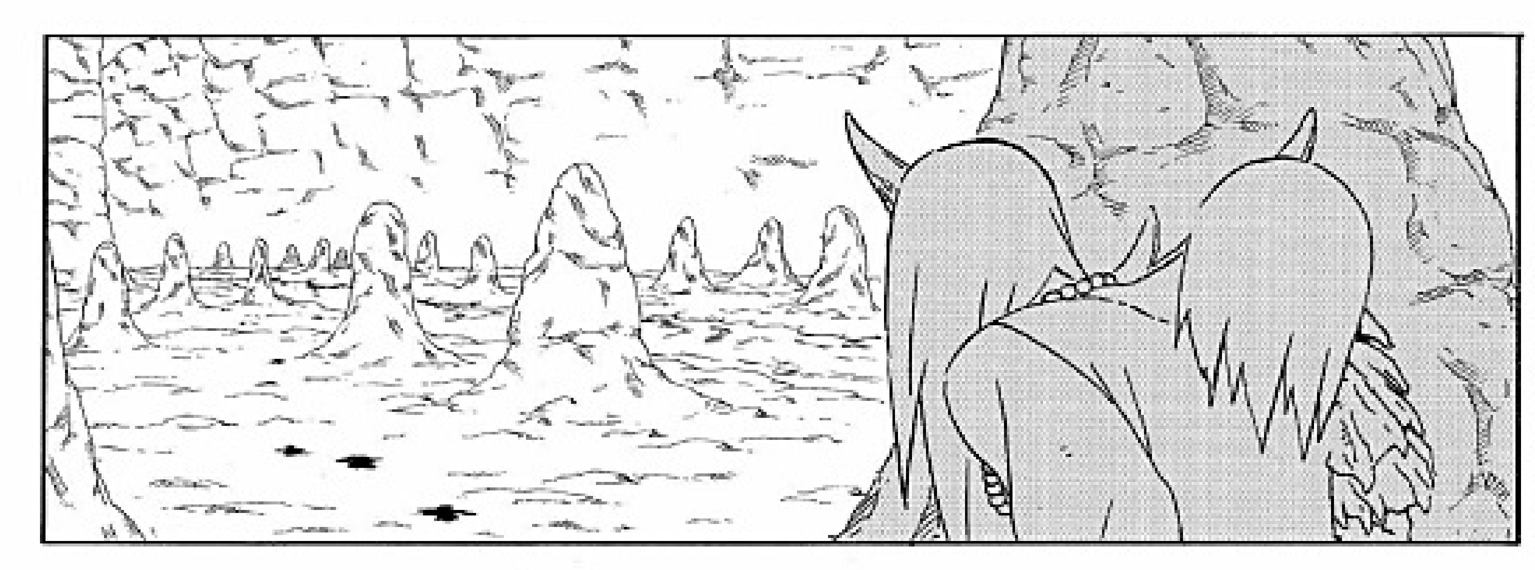


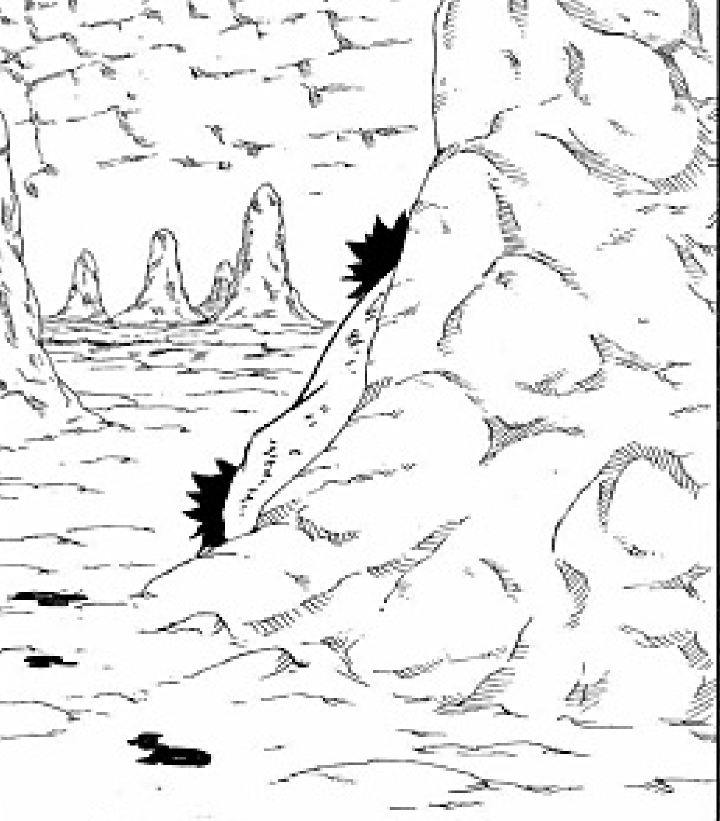

...AKAMARU...


READ THIS WAY


GRIN

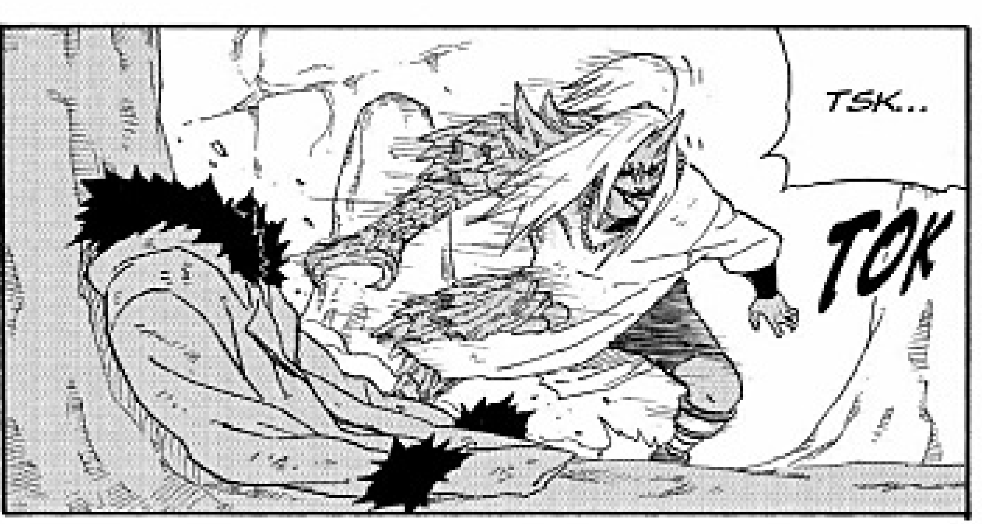

CLOMP





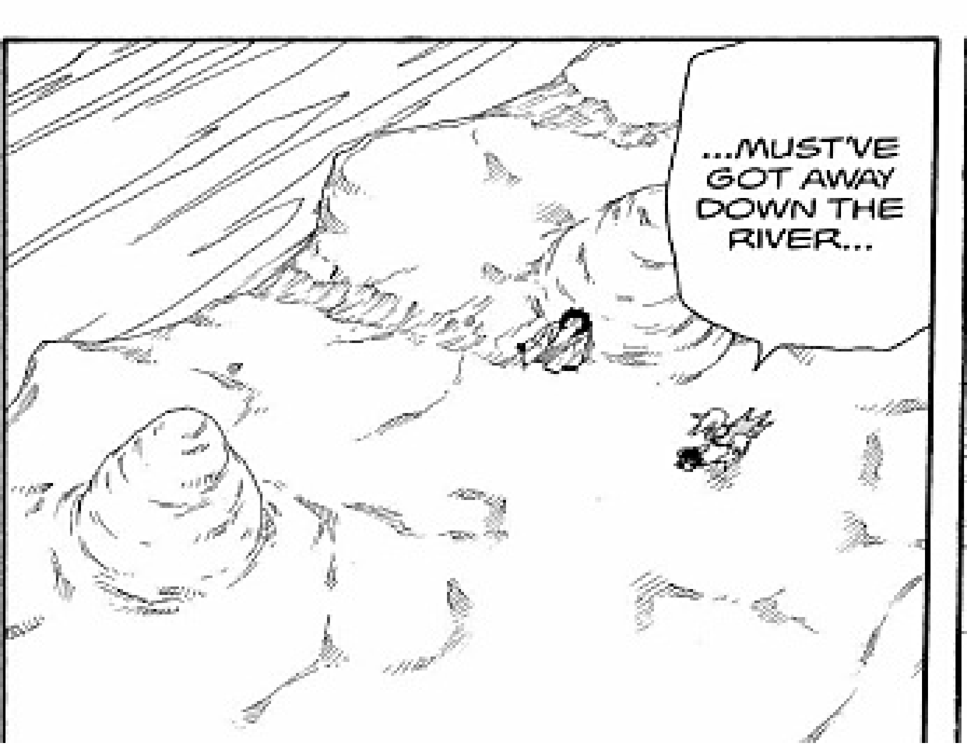

KRIK
FOO
SH

!!

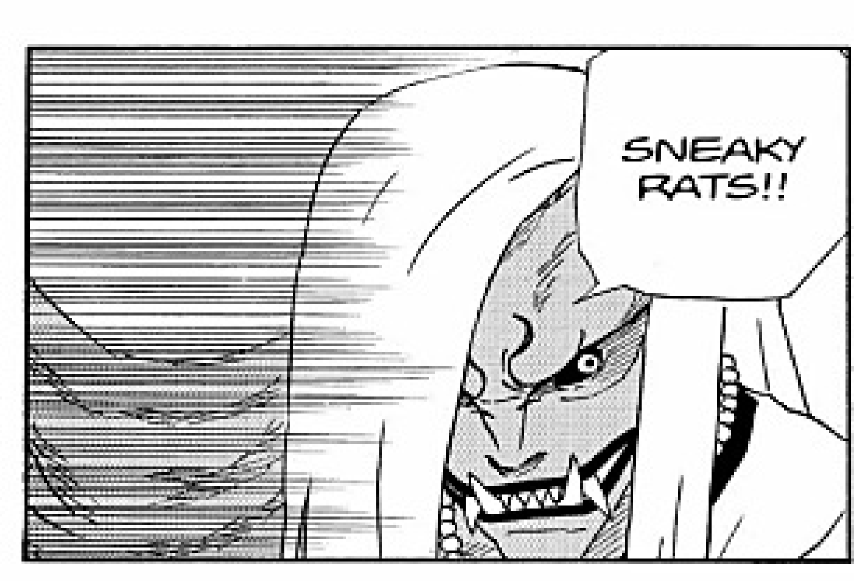

TSK...
TOK

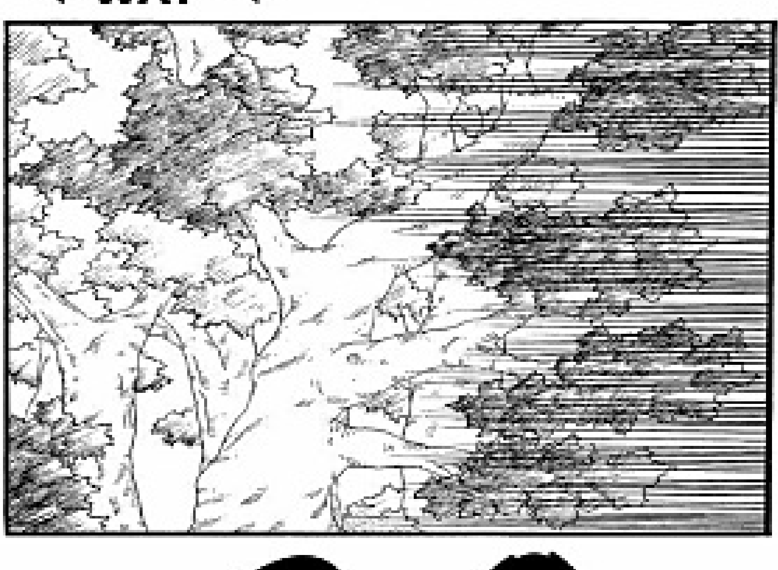

...

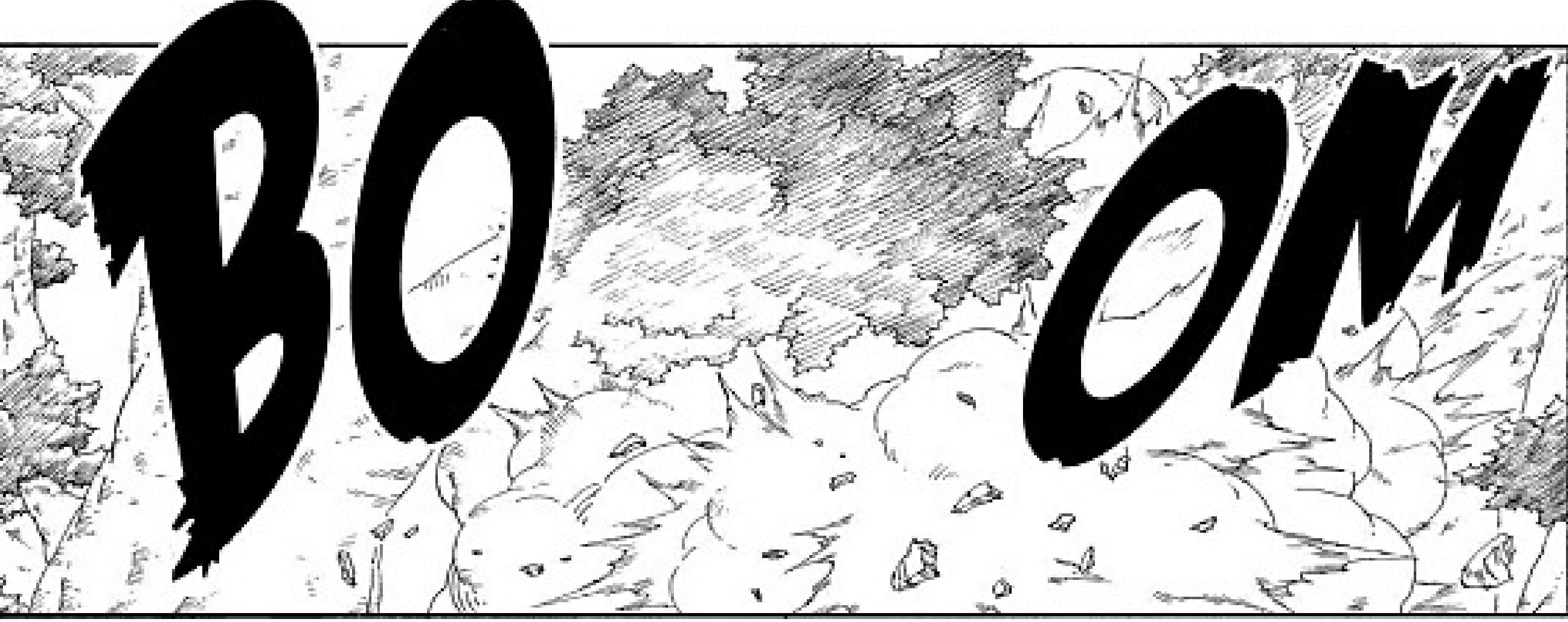



...MUST'VE GOT AWAY DOWN THE RIVER...

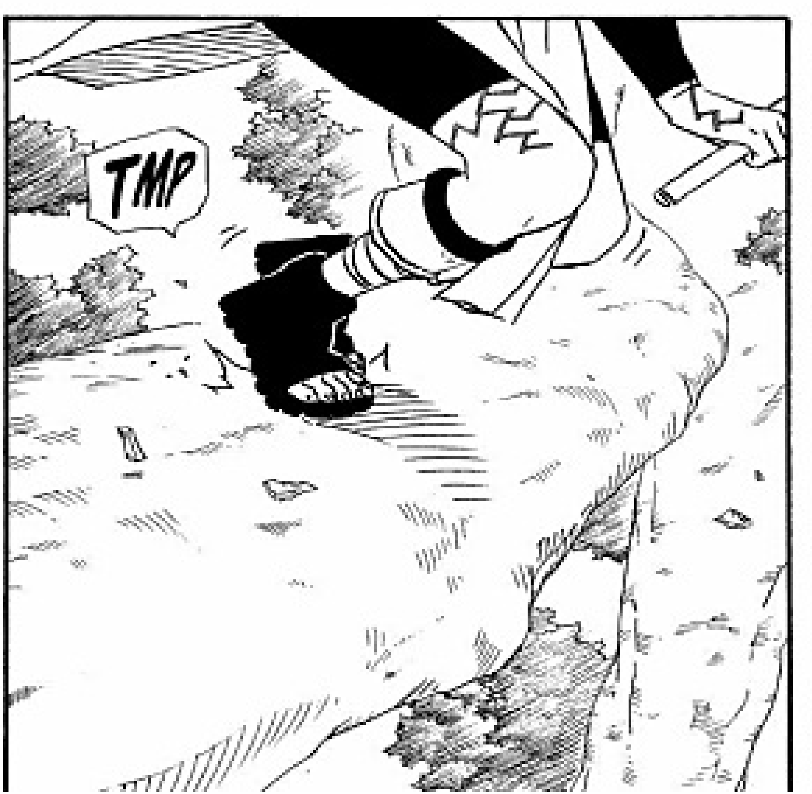

READ
THIS
WAY


SNEAKY
RATS!!



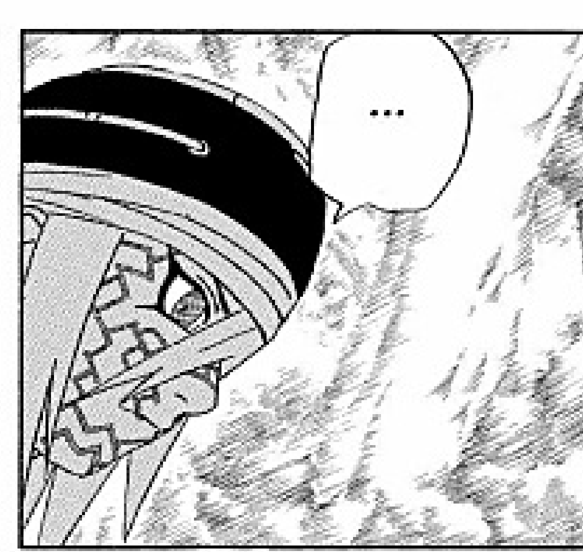

BOOM

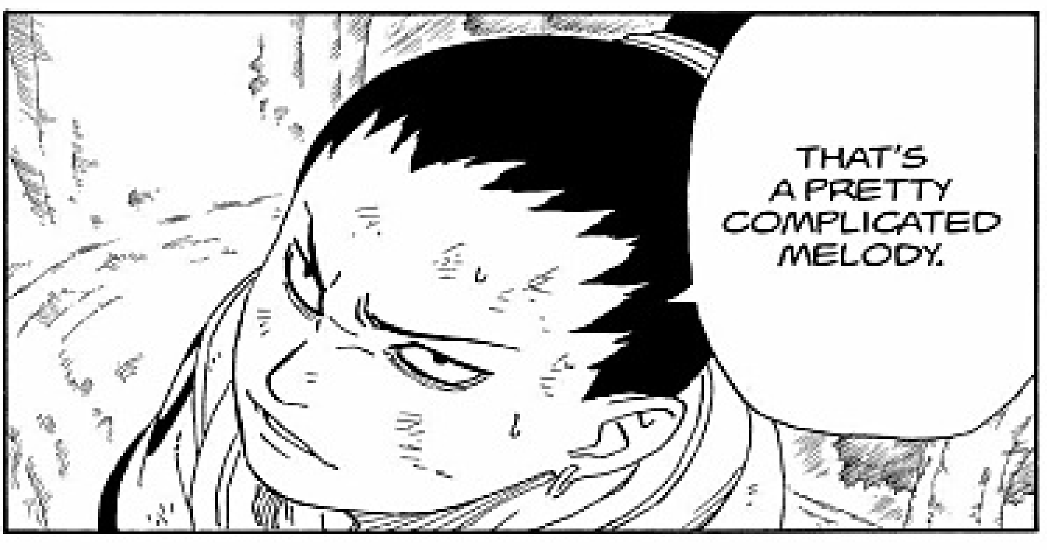

HUF
HUF

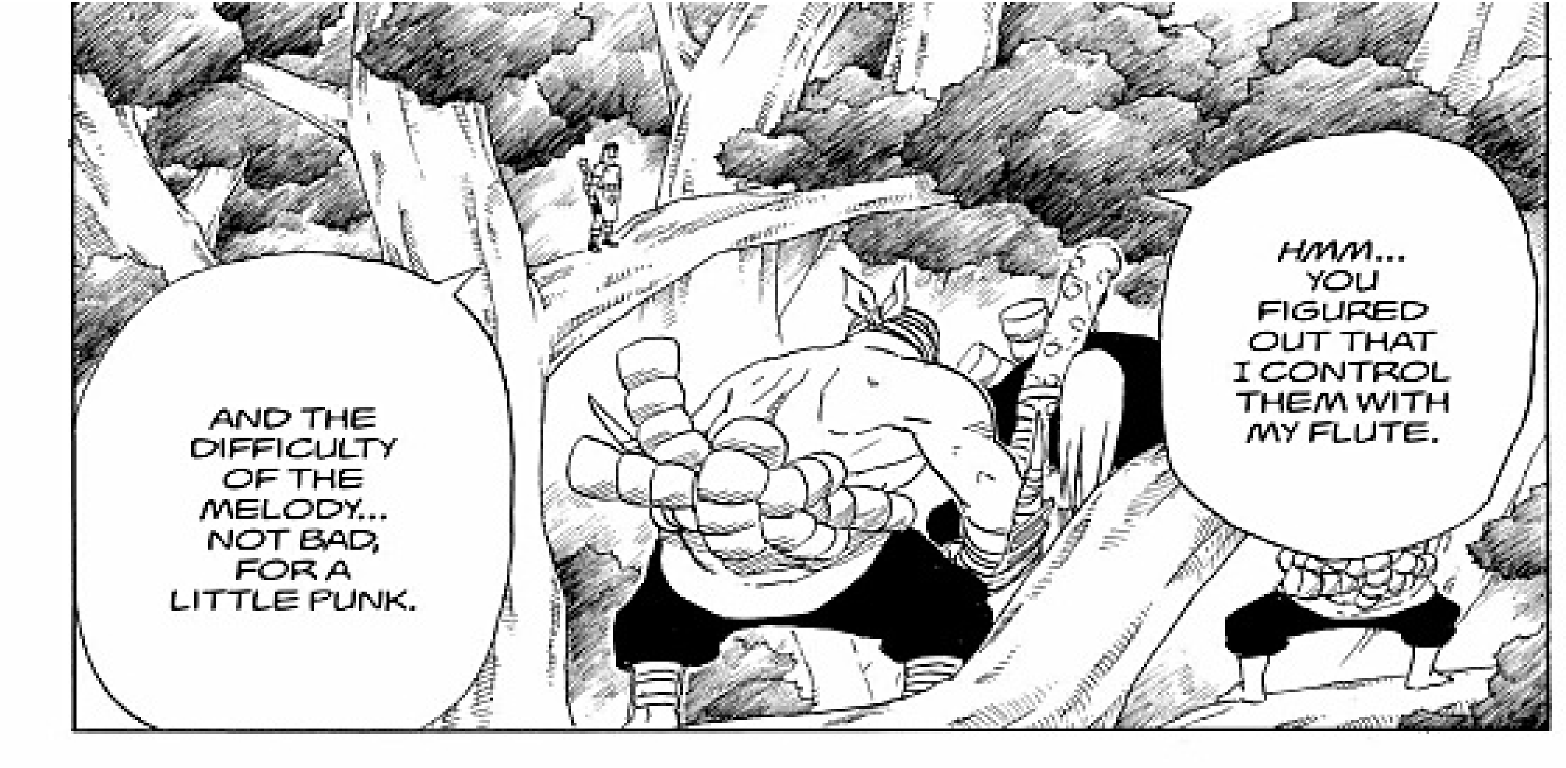

TMP


WELL... GOT YOU CORNERED, PUNK!


NOT BAD.
YOU TIMED THOSE ATTACKS WELL...
SO WELL THAT I HAD NO CHANCE TO USE JUTSU...
YOU MUST'VE PRACTICED HARD, HUH?


...

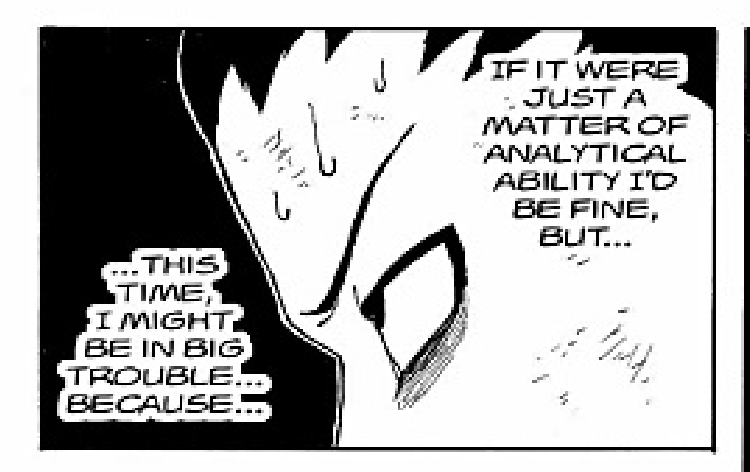

THAT'S A PRETTY COMPLICATED MELODY.


HMM... YOU FIGURED OUT THAT I CONTROL THEM WITH MY FLUTE.
AND THE DIFFICULTY OF THE MELODY... NOT BAD, FOR A LITTLE PUNK.


BUT... YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THIS MUSIC COMPLETELY.


TRUE...
ART ISN'T REALLY MY STRONG SUIT...


BUT... SINCE SHE CONTROLS THEM WITH HER FLUTE, THE MELODY MUST CONTAIN CERTAIN SOUND SEQUENCES THAT CONTROL EACH OF THEIR MOVE-MENTS.

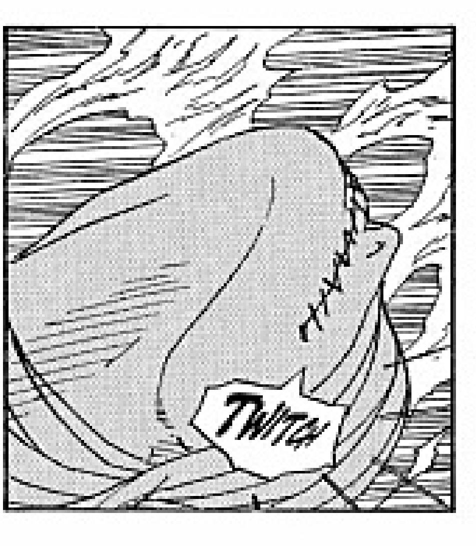

IF IT WERE JUST A MATTER OF ANALYTICAL ABILITY I'D BE FINE, BUT...
...THIS TIME, I MIGHT BE IN BIG TROUBLE... BECAUSE...


HEH HEH...
SHF

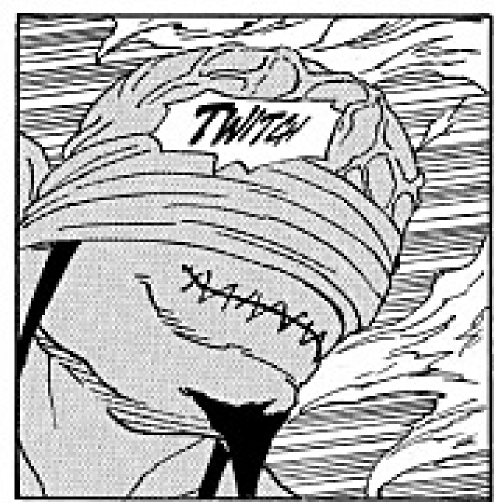

FINALE! NINTH PASSAGE ...!!
NO ONE SURVIVES THIS PIECE!
MAKYO NO RAN! DEMON REVOLUTION!!


I STINK AT MUSIC!

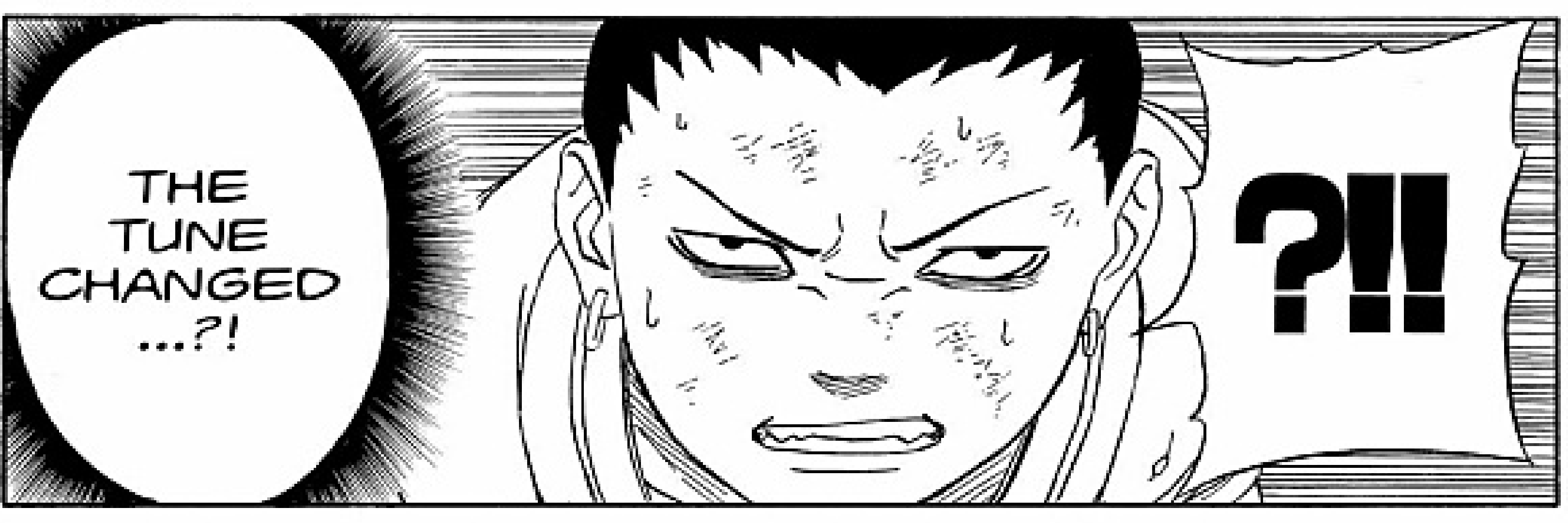



TWITCH


TWITCH


TWITCH





SOME-THING'S COMING!!

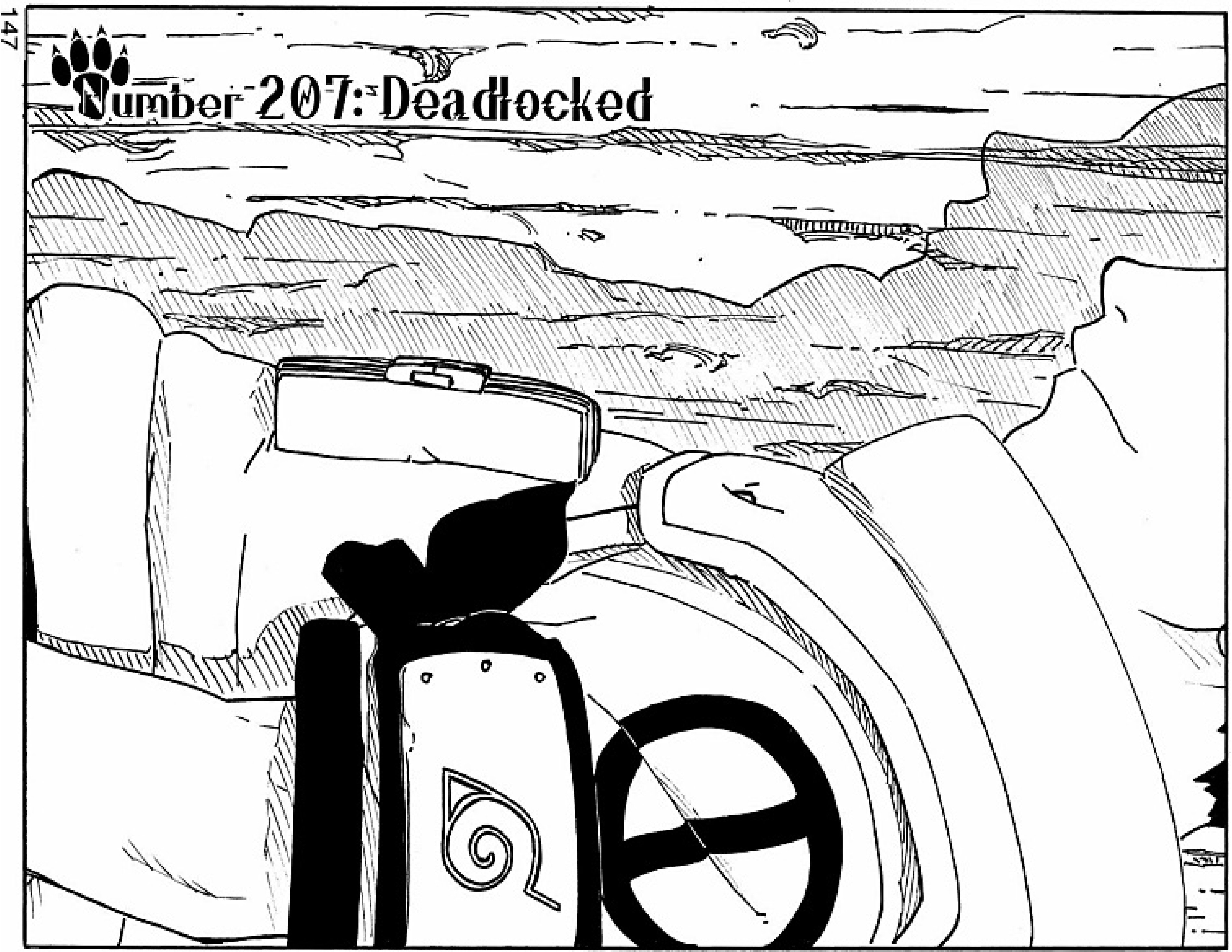
THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY: A STORY TOO EMBARRASSING TO WRITE DOWN, PART I

IT'S ABOUT TIME I ENDED WRITING MY PERSONAL HISTORY, BUT I'VE GOT NOTHING TO FILL OUT THIS BLANK PAGE WITH, SO I DECIDED TO CONTINUE WRITING A LITTLE BIT MORE. IT SEEMS THE MORE I WRITE, THE MORE I EMBARRASS MYSELF... BUT, I'M GOING TO WRITE AGAIN ANYWAY, AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT. FIRST OF ALL, THIS STORY IS SO POINTLESS AND SILLY THAT I'VE AVOIDED WRITING IT UNTIL NOW, AND I'M NOT REALLY GUNG-HO ON WRITING IT NOW EITHER. BUT, AGAINST... MY...BETTER...JUDGMENT...

I THINK IT WAS WHEN I WAS IN THE FIRST GRADE. I WAS SO INTO THIS ONE SENTAI, SFX ACTION/ADVENTURE HERO SERIES. THE ONE I PLAYED MOST OFTEN AT THAT AGE WAS *TAIYO SENTAI SAN BARUKAN* (SOLAR SQUADRON SUN VULCAN). I USED TO PLAY SUN VULCAN FIGHTERS WITH MY FRIEND AND MY TWIN BROTHER A LOT. SUN VULCAN WAS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER SENTAI SERIES. WHILE MOST SENTAI SERIES HEROES WERE MADE UP OF A CELL OF FIVE, SUN VULCAN WAS BRAVE ENOUGH TO SAVE THE EARTH WITH A CELL OF THREE. THE CELL CONSISTED OF VULEAGLE, VULSHARK AND VULPANTHER.

I'VE NEVER LIKED BEING THE LEADER, EVER SINCE I WAS A KID. SO I DECIDED TO PLAY THE ROLES OF EITHER VULSHARK OR VULPANTHER, THE SECOND OR THIRD RANKED GUYS. BUT, BECAUSE VULSHARK'S POSE LOOKED LAME TO ME, EVEN AT THAT AGE, I DECIDED TO GO WITH VULPANTHER. ...ANYWAY... WELL... *UMM*... I REALLY GOT INTO THE VULPANTHER CHARACTER. OR, IT WAS MORE LIKE... I ALREADY WAS VULPANTHER. BASICALLY, I WAS INTOXICATED WITH VULPANTHER. HOW MUCH SO...? TO BE CONTINUED...

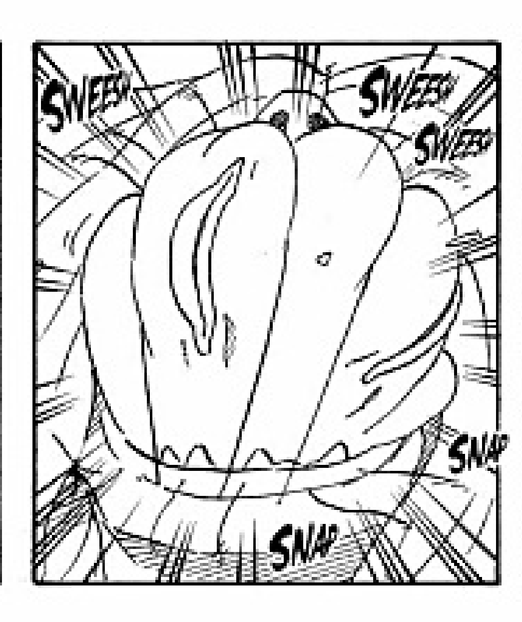
P.S. THE TRUTH SHALL BE REVEALED!


Number 207: Deadlocked

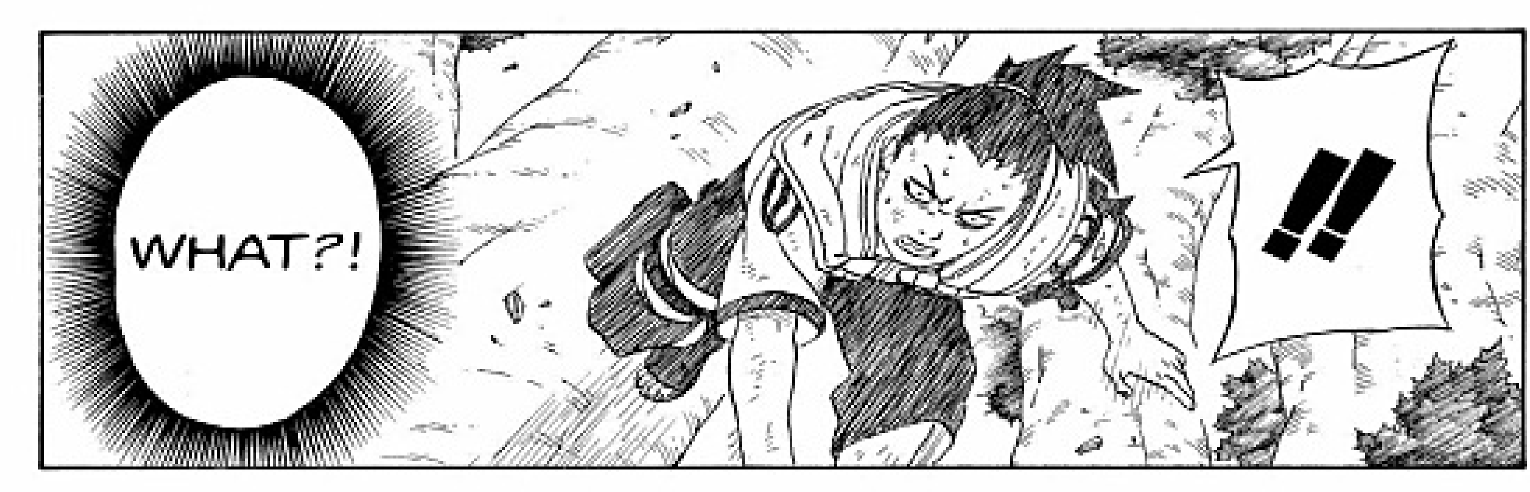

SOME-THING'S COMING!
SMASH
SKRITCH SKRITCH
SKRITCH SKRITCH
SKRITCH SKRITCH


READ THIS WAY


SHWIP SHWIP
SPING SPING
SPING


SWEESH
SWEESH
SWEESH
SNAP
SNAP


SWEESH SWEESH


!!
WHAT?!

ZYUU

TAK


ARGH!
SHH





WHAAT ?!
SHWIP
!

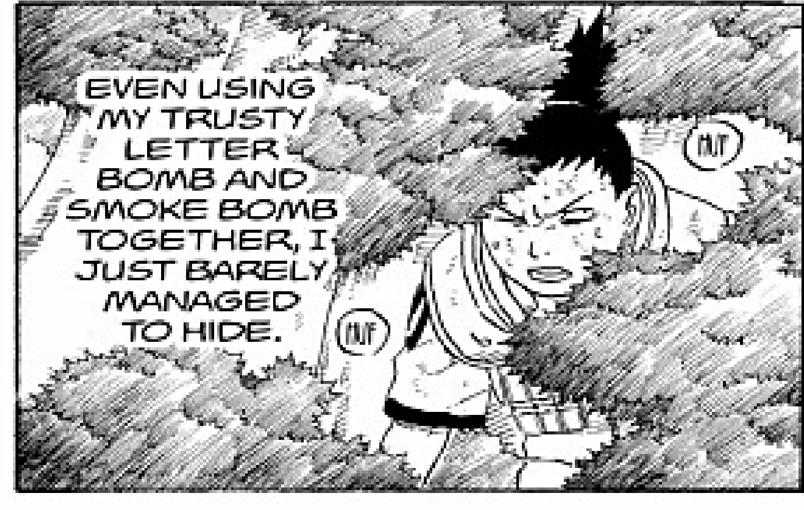


TAK
GUOOOOH
TSK!!
CLAP
FWIP
ZWIP
THEY'RE...

BOOF

TAP

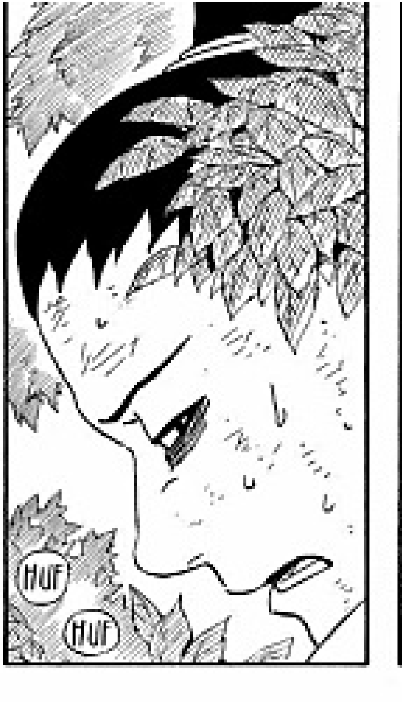
HE BOLTED ONCE HE REALIZED THE ENORMOUS POWER OF THE SPIRITS...HE'S SMARTER THAN I THOUGHT... BUT...

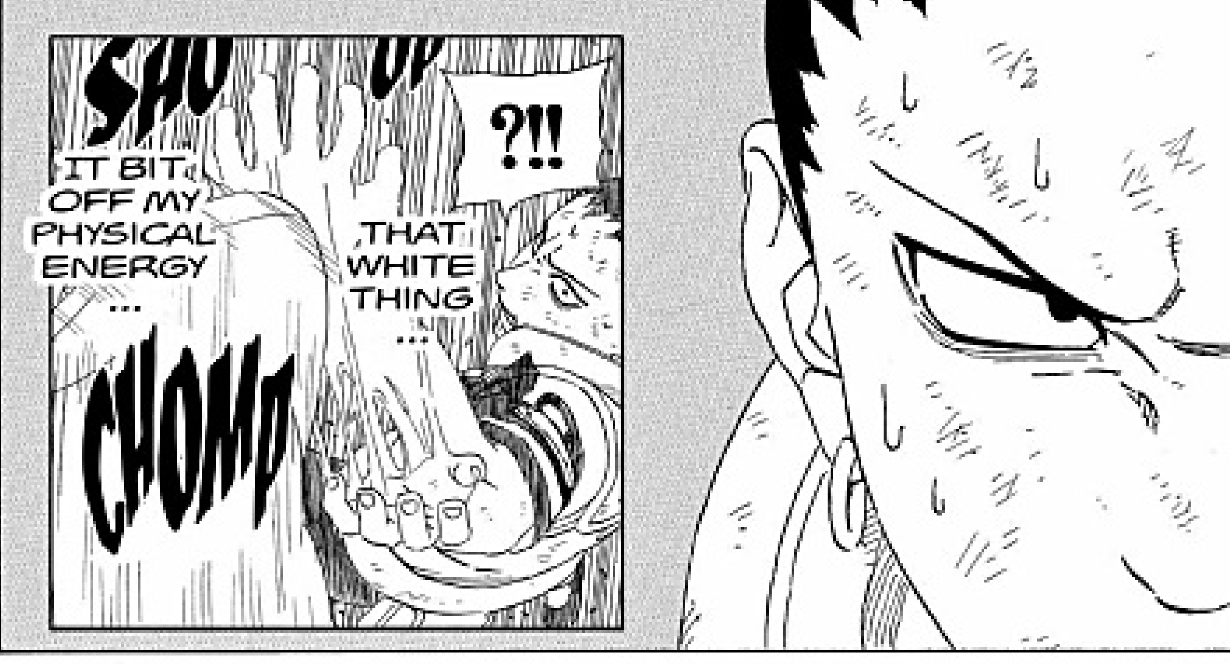






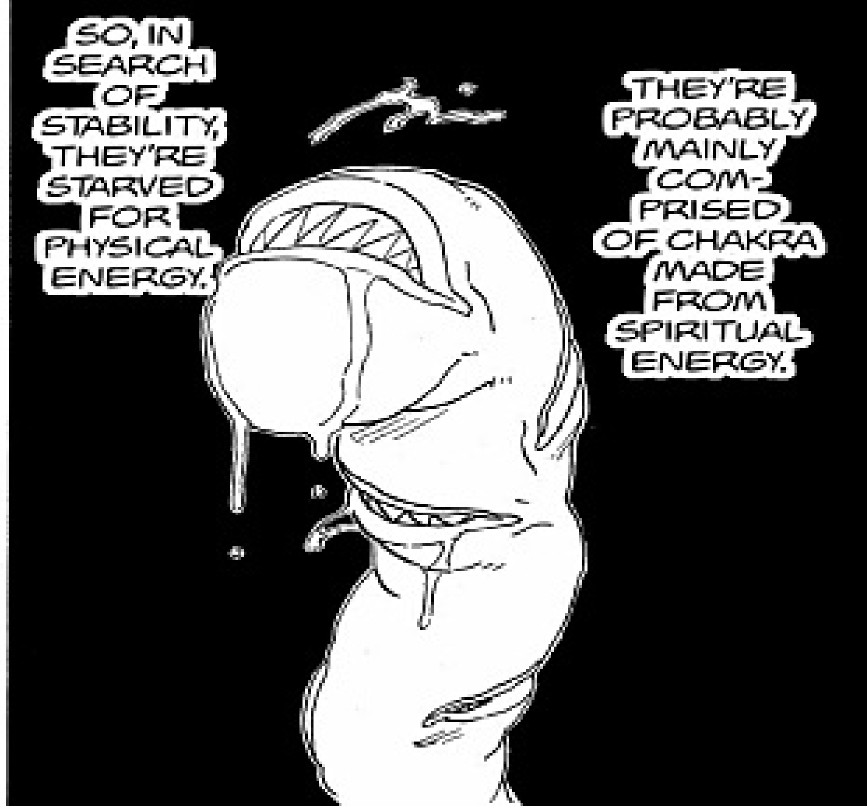



HUF
HUF

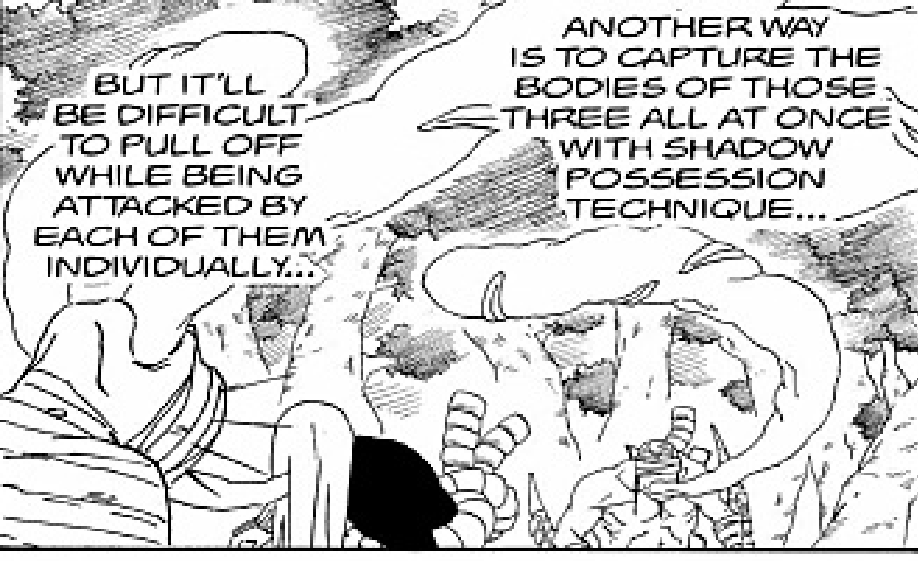

?!!
THAT WHITE THING...
IT BIT OFF MY PHYSICAL ENERGY...
CHOMP

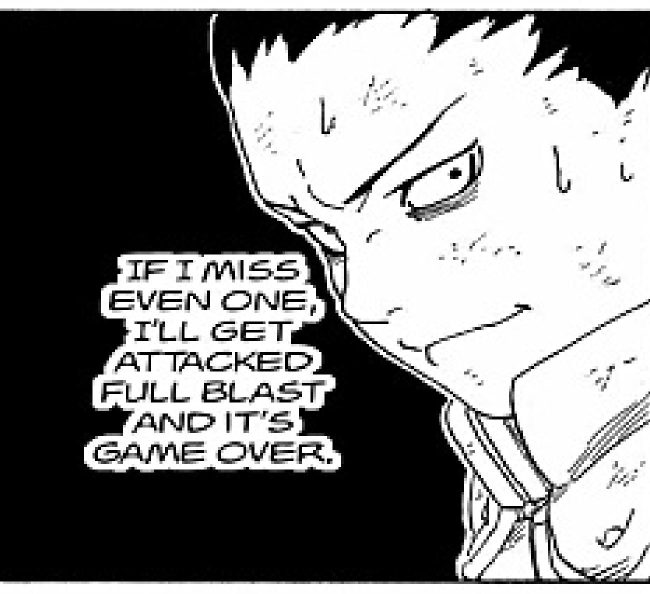

FROM THE LOOKS OF WHERE MY SHURIKEN WENT IN, THEY MUST BE...
...SEMI-SUBSTANCES. JUST CHAKRA WITH AN APPETITE.

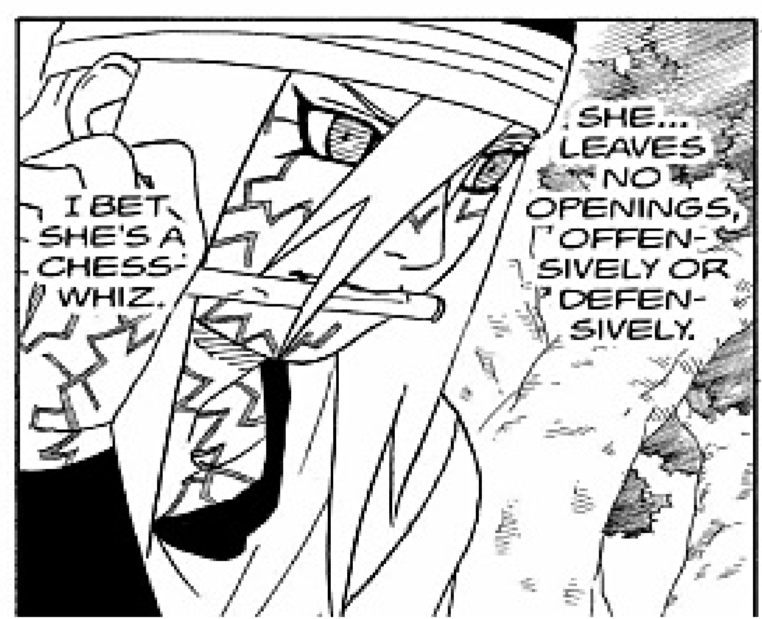

IF I KEEP TAKING ON HUNGRY CHAKRA LIKE THIS I WON'T BE ABLE TO USE MY OWN CHAKRA ANYMORE...
THESE ARE TROUBLE.


THEY'RE PROBABLY MAINLY COM-PRISED OF CHAKRA MADE FROM SPIRITUAL ENERGY.
SO, IN SEARCH OF STABILITY, THEY'RE STARVED FOR PHYSICAL ENERGY.

A SHINOBI THAT MAKES SPECIAL CHAKRA LIKE ME... NO DOUBT IT'S A SECRET TECHNIQUE.
I HAVE TO IGNORE THE WHITE THINGS AND AIM FOR THE MAIN BODIES.
THE QUICKEST WAY IS TO SILENCE THAT FLUTE, THOUGH.
BUT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET NEAR HER.

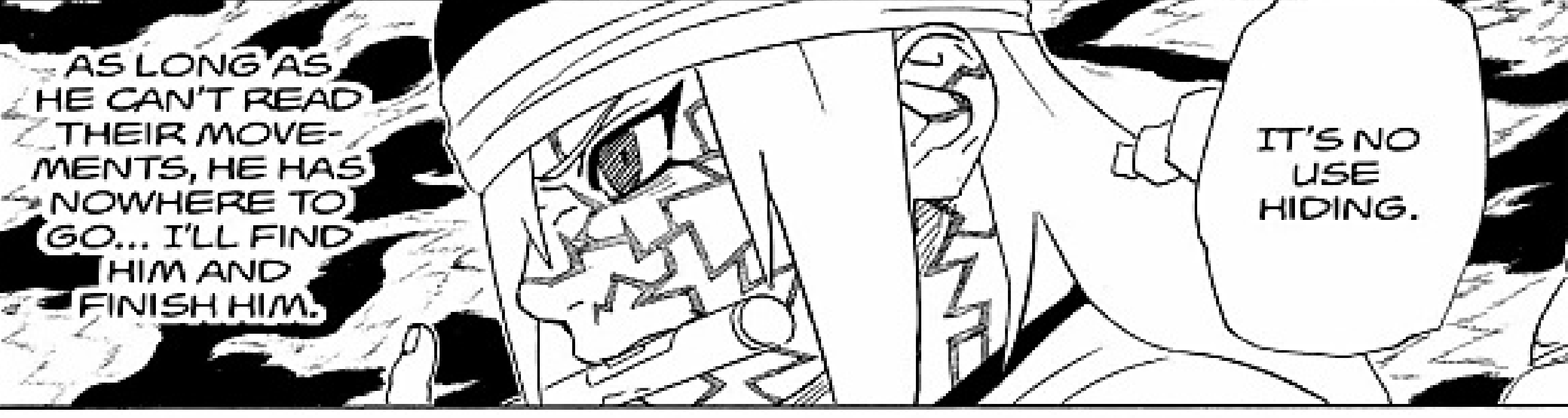




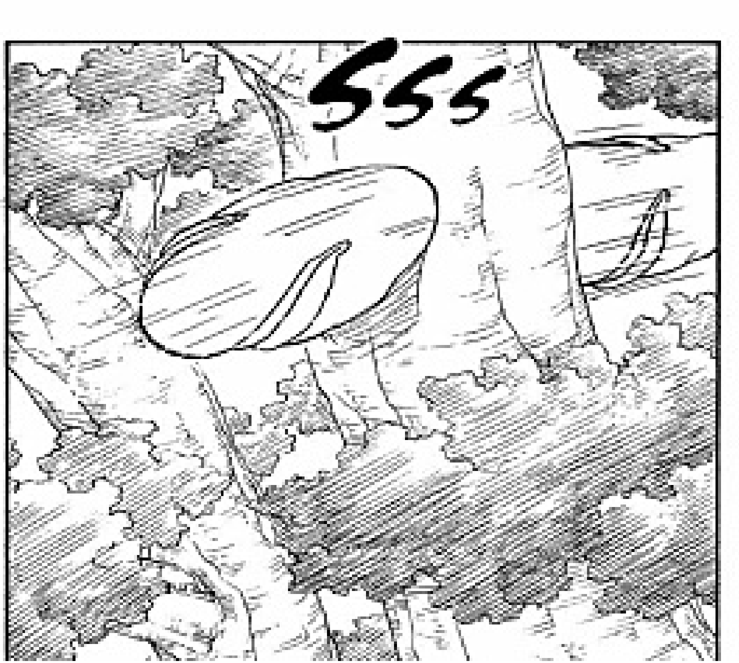




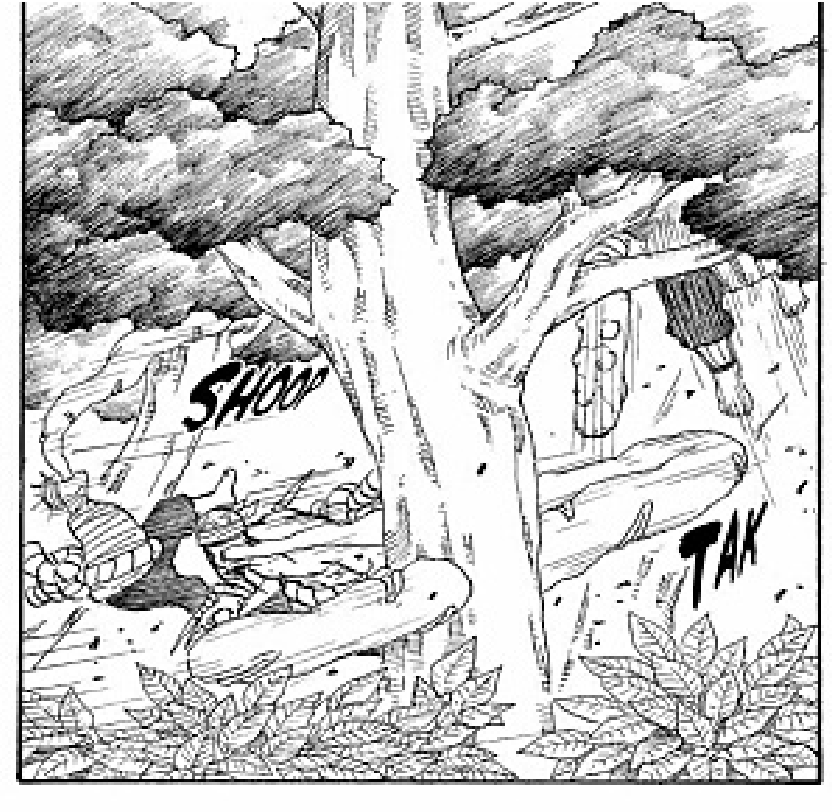
MAN... I FEEL LIKE I'M PLAYING WITHOUT A ROOK OR A BISHOP.
SHF





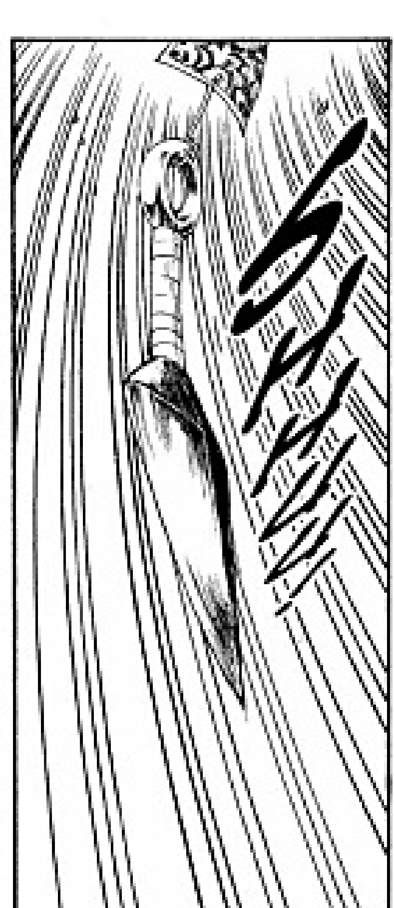



READ THIS WAY

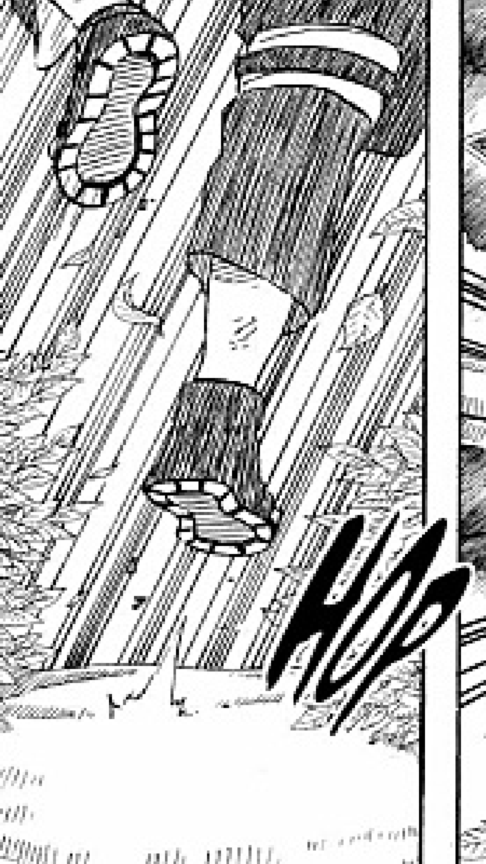

SHOOP
TAK


OKAY. ALL SET...
ALL I GOTTA DO NOW IS GO FOR IT.
CHINK


I HAVE NINE ATTACKS...
THE TIME BETWEEN ATTACKS WILL MAKE OR BREAK THIS!

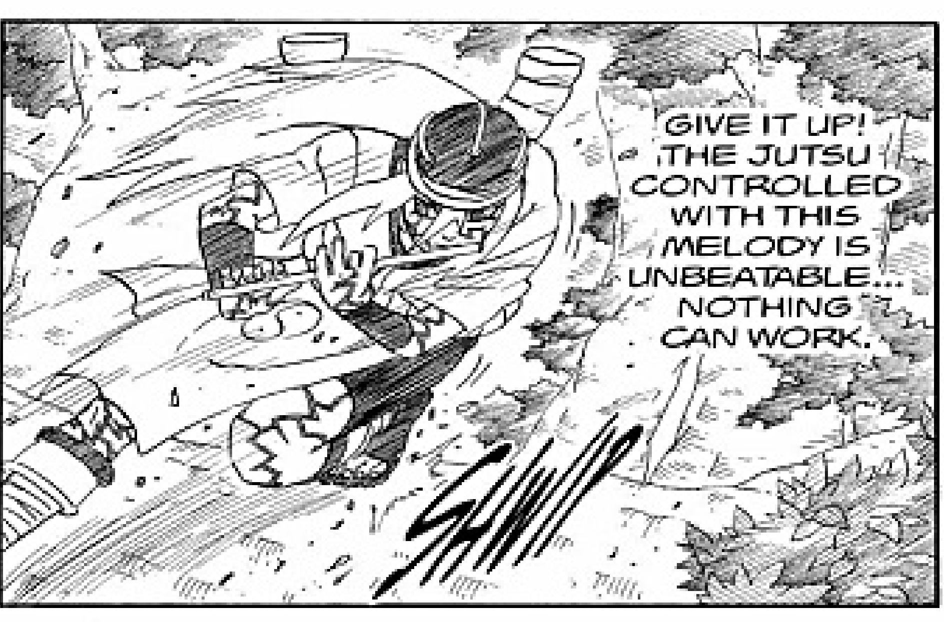

SHHH

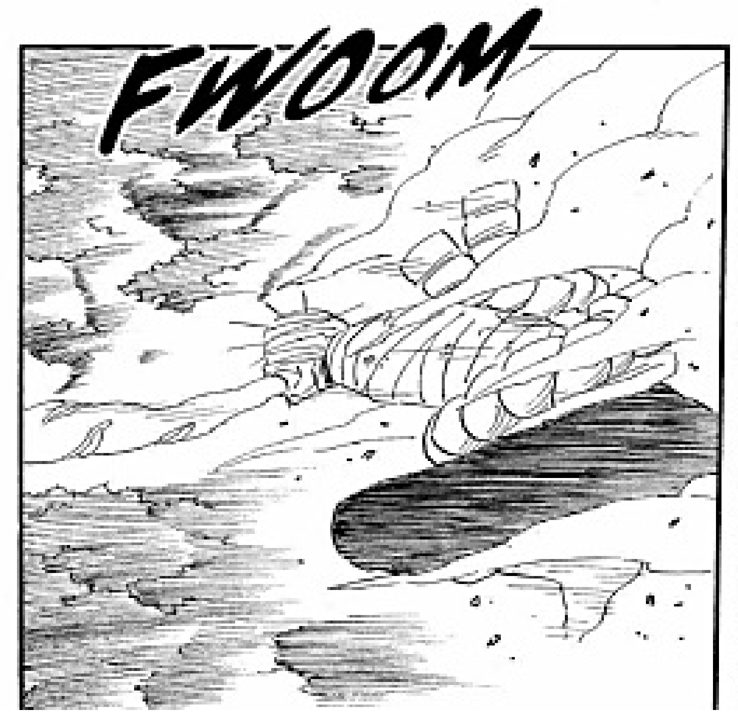

!
THUNK

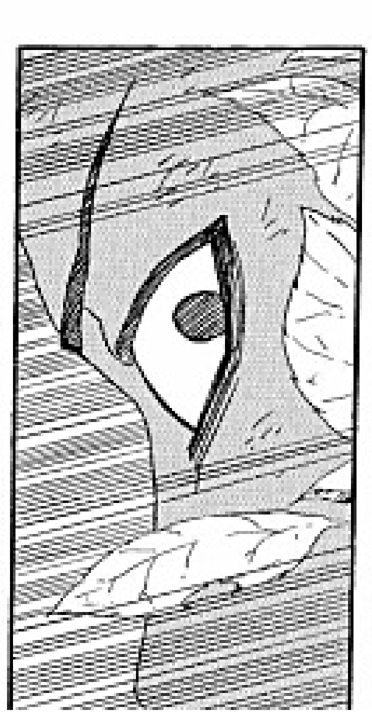

HOP

BOOM




GIVE IT UP! THE JUTSU CONTROLLED WITH THIS MELODY IS UNBEATABLE... NOTHING CAN WORK.


FWOOM





WHERE IS HE?!

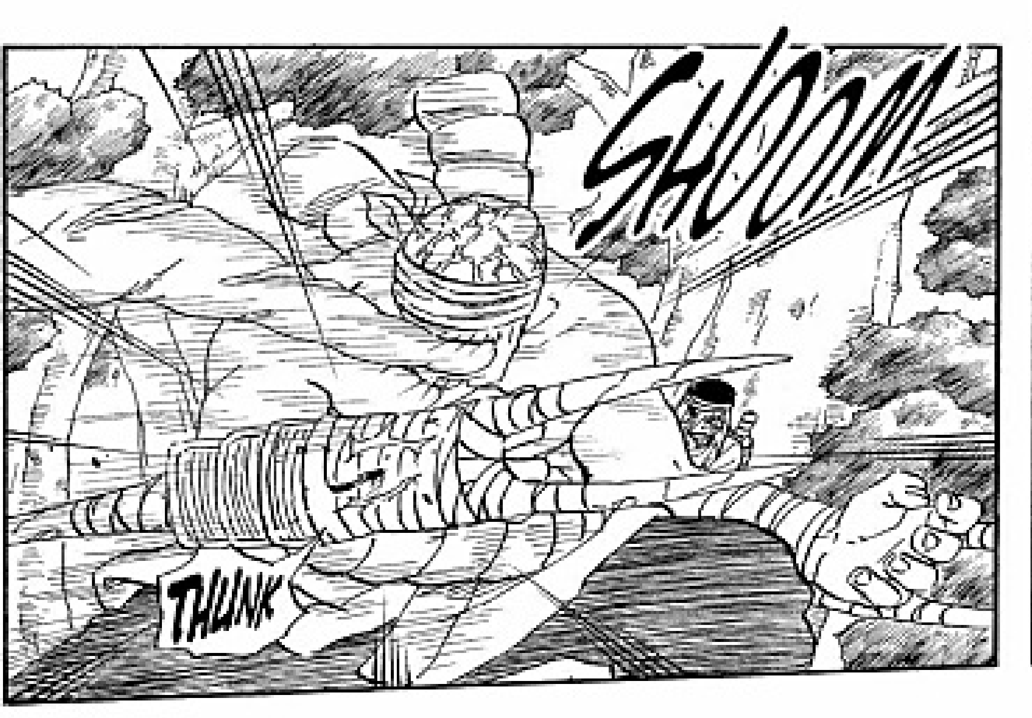
QUIT SCAM-
PERING
AROUND,
YOU RAT!!



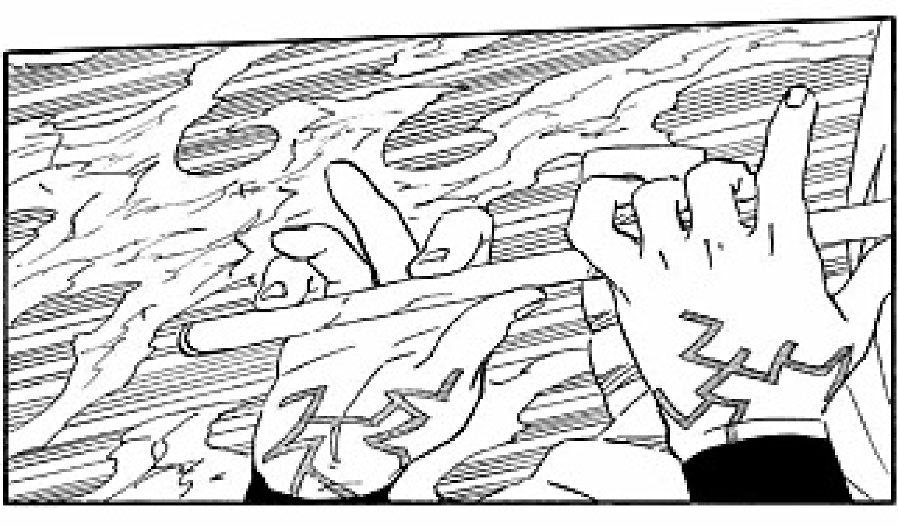




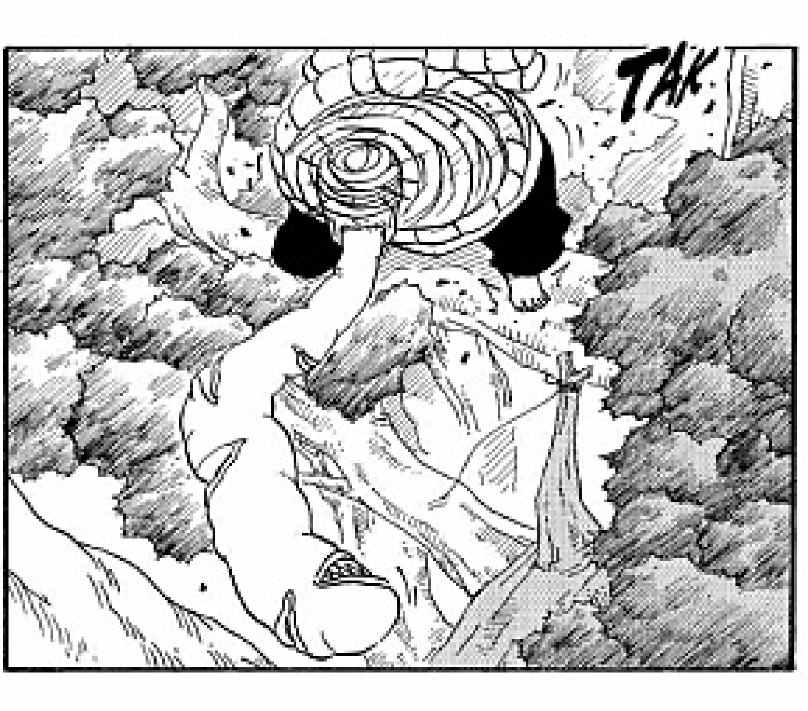



SHOOM
THUNK


OVER THERE!

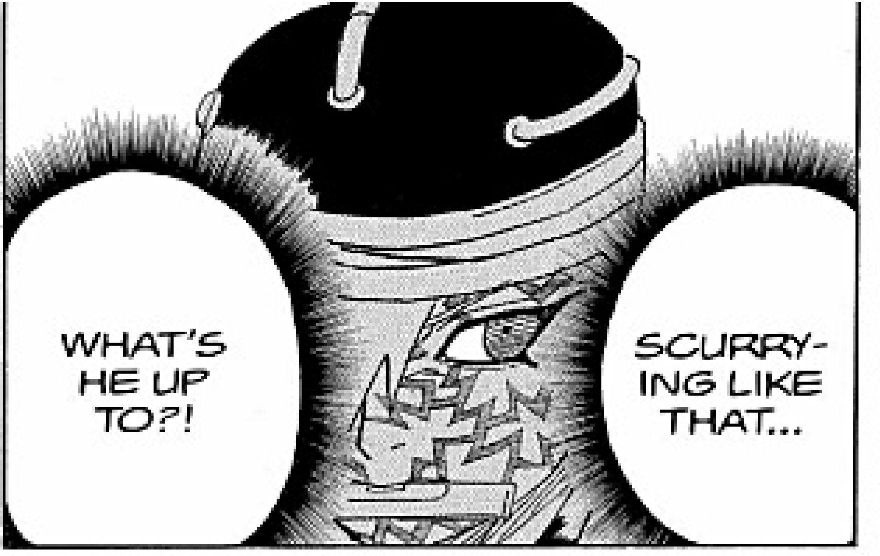


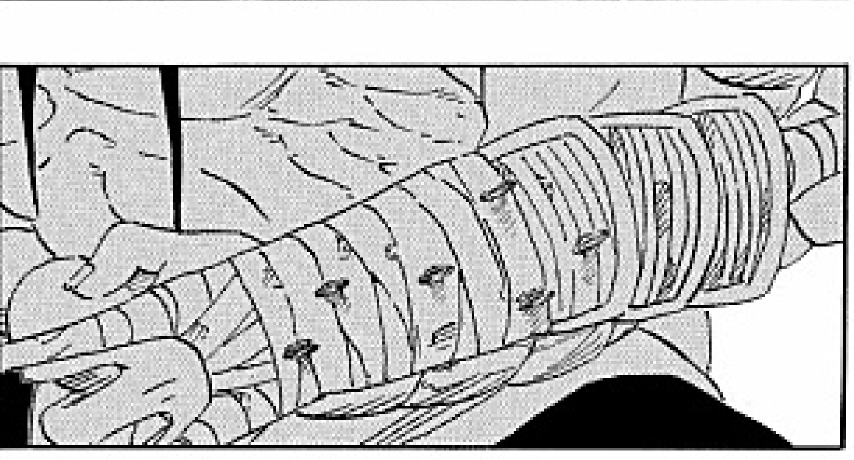

FWAA

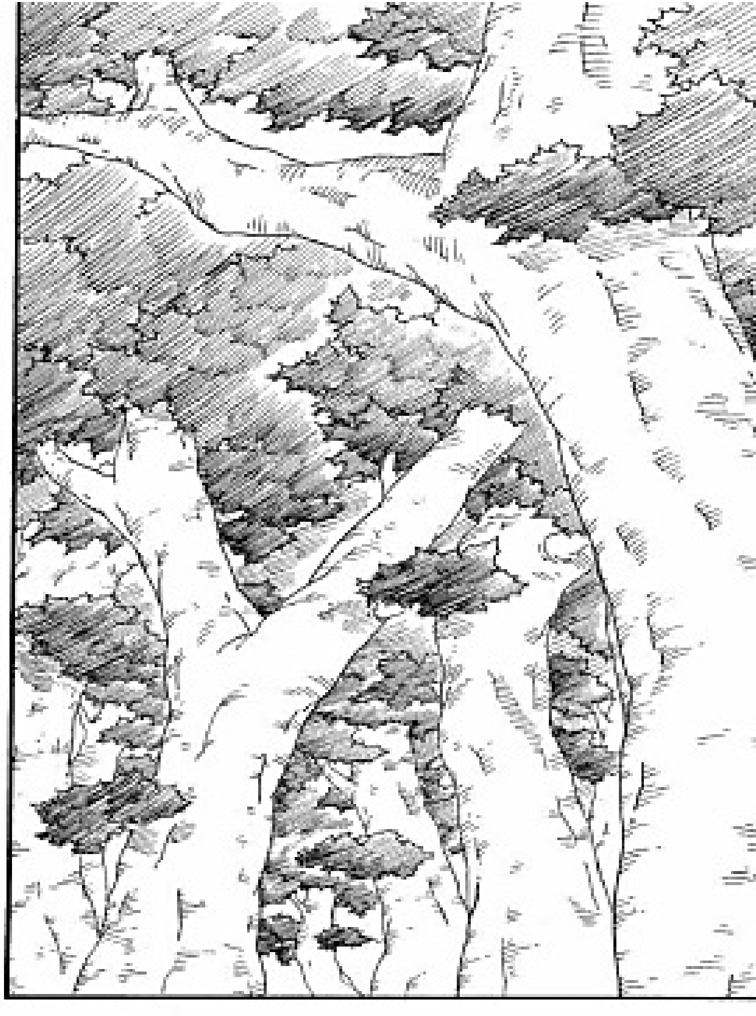

TAK

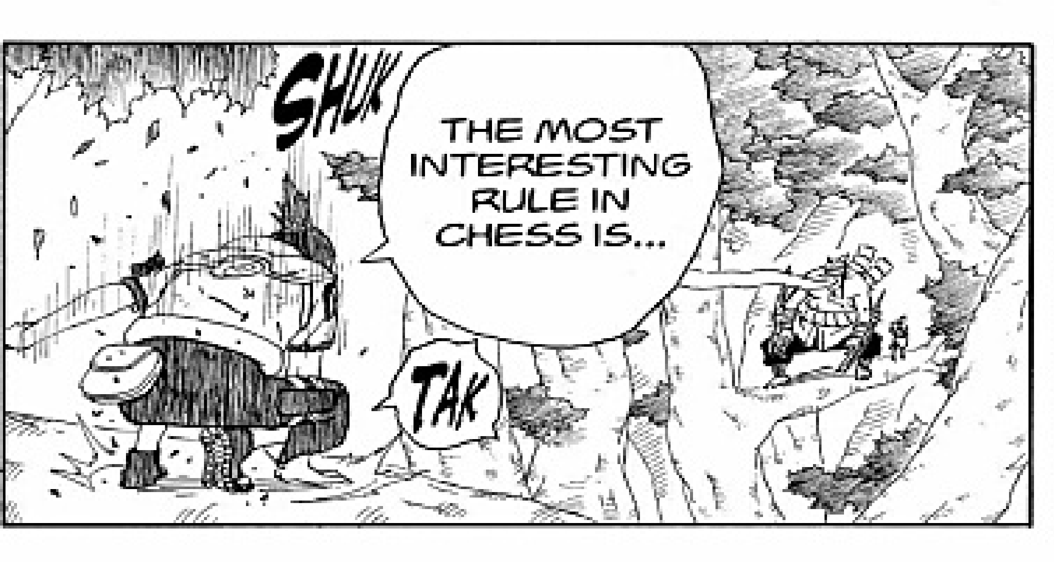


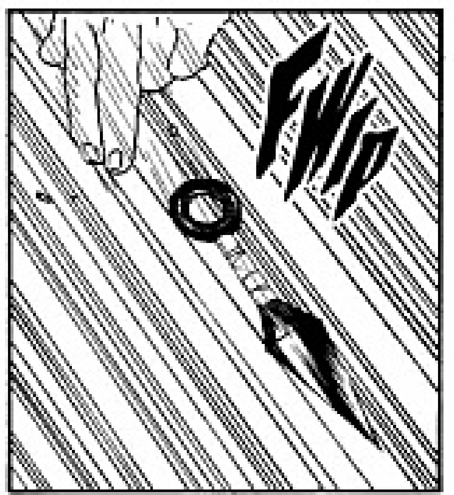
SHUNG
SPING
TSK!
THUNK
A PLOY TO CONCEAL HIS LOCATION...?!
STOP MESSING AROUND!!
SHF
SWISH
SWISH
SWISH
SWISH

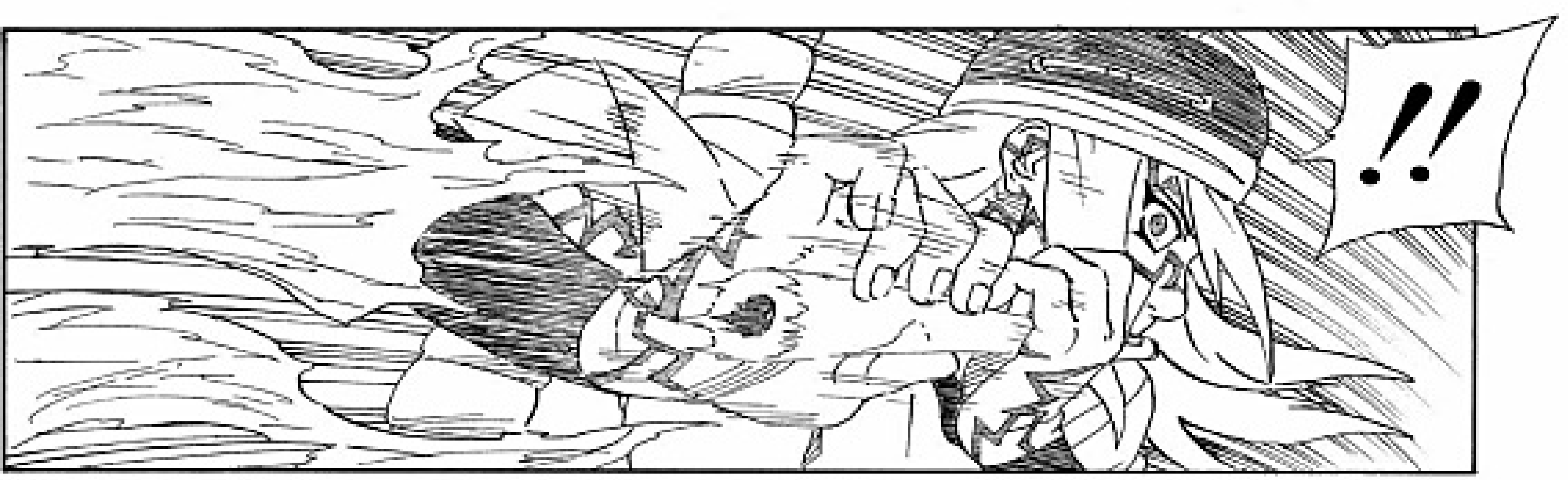

SCURRY-
ING LIKE
THAT...
WHAT'S
HE UP
TO?!





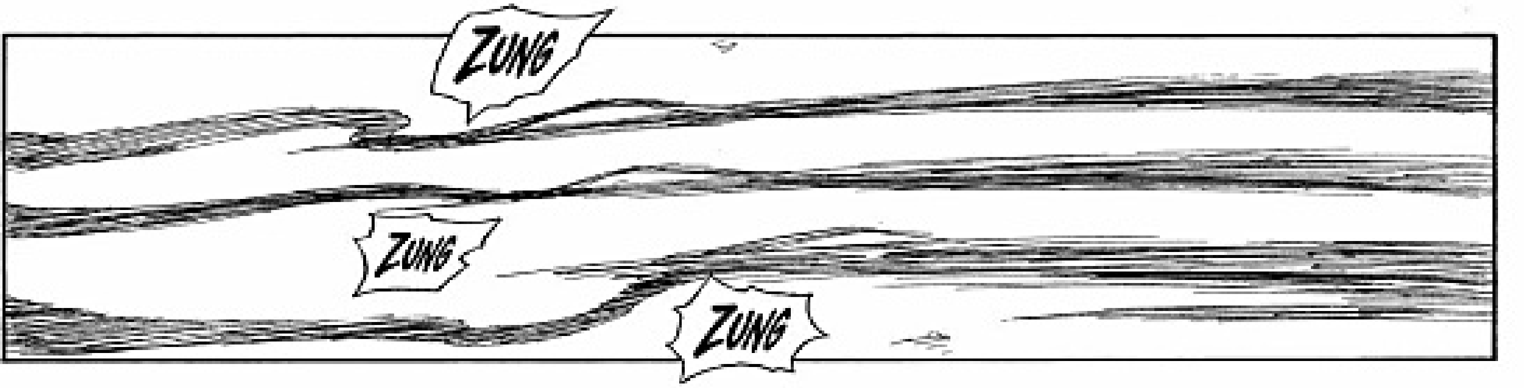

SHUK
THE MOST
INTERESTING
RULE IN
CHESS IS...
TAK



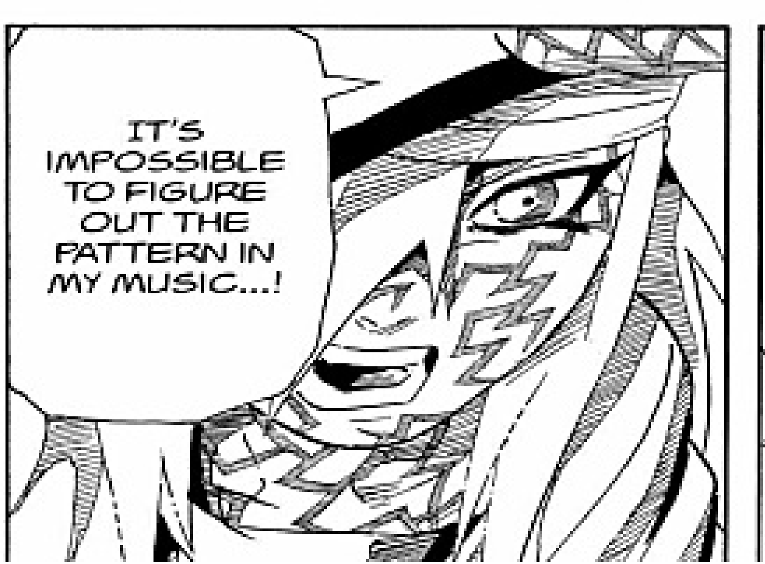

!!


POSH
SWPT
...ONCE YOU GET YOUR OPPONENT'S PAWNS, THEY BECOME YOURS TO COMMAND.
SSH
...FLASH?!
?!
OH, NO! HE'S USING THE LIGHT FROM THE FLASH TO EXTEND SHADOWS...

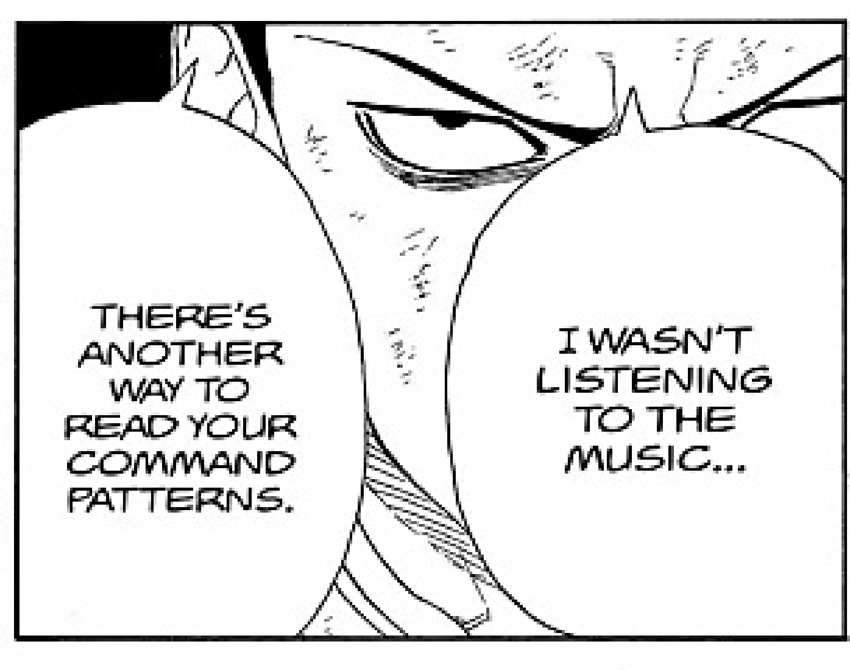
KAGEMANE NO JUTSU! SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE!!













YOUR FINGERS.

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY: A STORY TOO EMBARRASSING TO WRITE DOWN, PART 2

FOR THE ALMOST ONE YEAR I DECIDED TO IDENTIFY MYSELF WITH VULPANTHER, I ENCOUNTERED MANY DIFFICULTIES. VULPANTHER IS YELLOW. BOTTOM LINE, HE'S SYMBOLIZED BY THE COLOR YELLOW! SO, WHENEVER I HAD TO CHOOSE A COLOR, I CHOSE YELLOW! ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING HAD TO BE YELLOW!

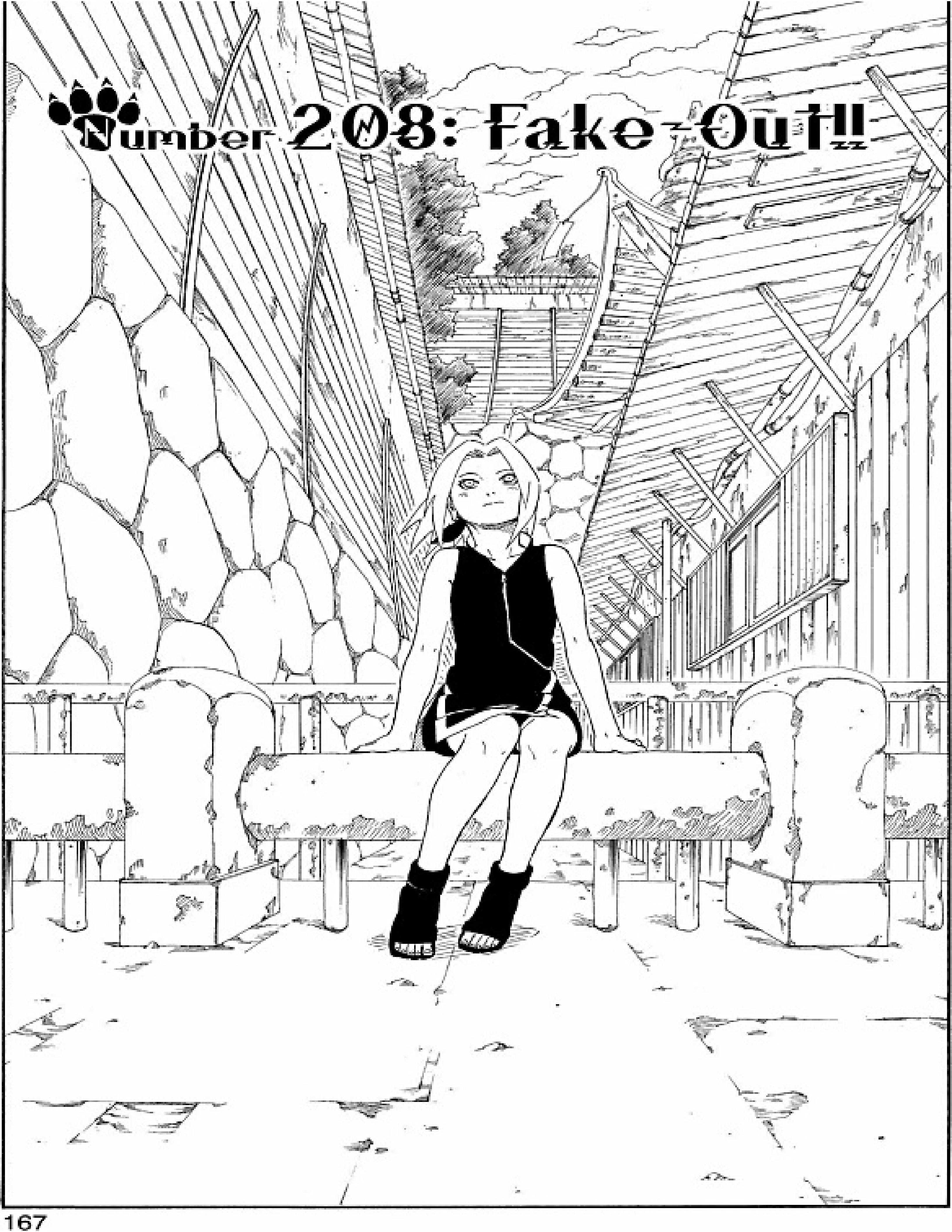
VULPANTHER WORE A YELLOW JACKET SO, OF COURSE, I WORE YELLOW CLOTHES. BUT... THE YELLOW CLOTHES LOOKED WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.

VULPANTHER IS [SYMBOLIZED BY] CURRY. BOTTOM LINE, HE LOVES CURRY AND RICE! SO, EVERY TIME SOMEONE ASKED ME, "WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?" OF COURSE I ANSWERED "CURRY AND RICE!" ... FOR SOME REASON, IN THIS KIND OF SENTAI SERIES, MANY CHARACTERS WHOSE SYMBOLIC COLOR WAS YELLOW LIKED CURRY AND RICE. THE YELLOW RANGER OF THE GO RANGERS (MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS IN ENGLISH) WAS NO EXCEPTION.

VULPANTHER IS A CHARACTER THAT EATS TONS OF CURRY AND RICE AND ALWAYS ASKS FOR SECONDS. HE PILES UP PLATES ONE AFTER ANOTHER, EATING AS FAST AS WANKO SOBA SPEED-EATERS. AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER, HE WOULD PILE UP ABOUT 20 PLATES. BASICALLY, ONE LOOK AT HIM REVEALED CLEARLY THAT HE LOVED CURRY AND RICE.

SO YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW EXCITED I GOT ON DAYS WHEN CURRY AND RICE WAS SERVED FOR DINNER!! A WANNABE VULPANTHER DEFINITELY HAD TO ASK FOR SECONDS NO MATTER WHAT, EVEN WHEN HE FELT LIKE THROWING UP OR THAT HIS STOMACH WAS GOING TO BURST. THEN I WOULD SAY TO MY MOTHER, "SECONDS, PLEASE! NEXT PLATE!" MY MOTHER WOULD SAY, "...? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! IF YOU WANT SECONDS, PUT IT ON THE SAME PLATE YOU HAVE NOW!! NO NEED TO DIRTY ANOTHER PLATE!!" I THOUGHT, "...CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT..."

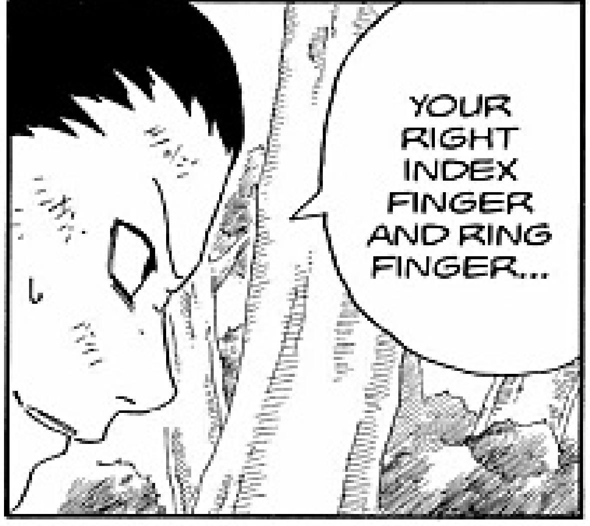
VULPANTHER ALSO CLIMBS WALLS. HE HAS SHARP CLAWS AND CAN CLIMB NO MATTER WHAT, EVEN IF THE WALL IS PERPENDICULAR TO THE GROUND! OF COURSE, I HAD TO CLIMB ANY PERPENDICULAR WALL I SAW WHEN PLAYING SUN VULCAN. ...EVEN I, AS A FIRST GRADER, KNEW THAT NO ONE COULD CLIMB A PERPENDICULAR WALL. BUT, IN FRONT OF VULEAGLE AND VULSHARK, I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GO FOR IT. AS I RAN TOWARD THE WALL, I THOUGHT, "...HONESTLY, PLAYING VULPANTHER IS TOUGH..." JUMP!! AND SPLAT, I FLATTENED MYSELF AGAINST THAT WALL! SCRATCH! "OUCH!!" ...MY FINGERNAILS GOT TORN OFF. ...FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, I QUIT PLAYING VULPANTHER.


Number 208: Fake-Out!!



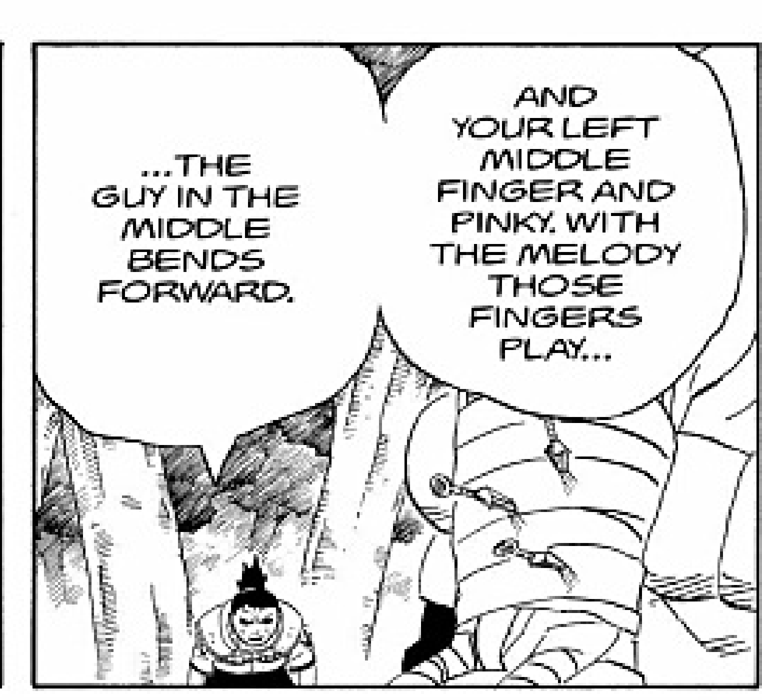
HE READ THEIR MOVES... BY MEMORIZING MY FINGER MOVE-MENTS...?

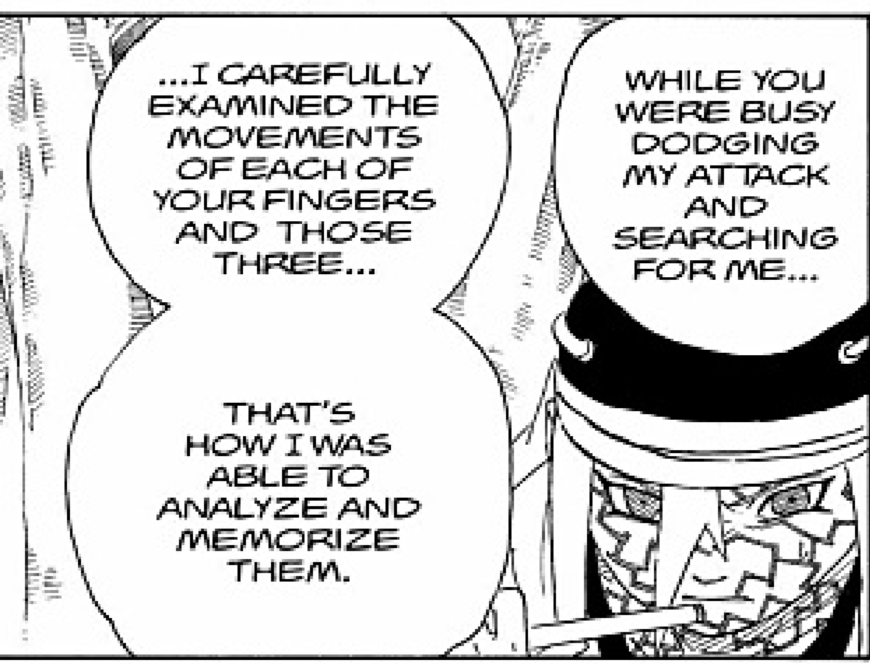


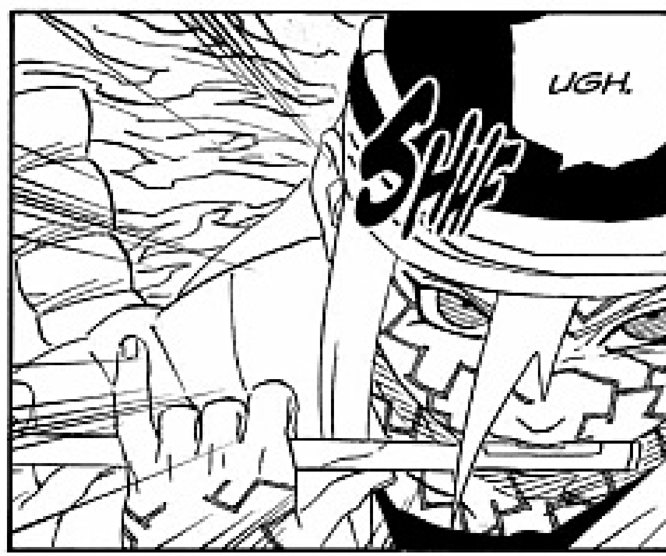


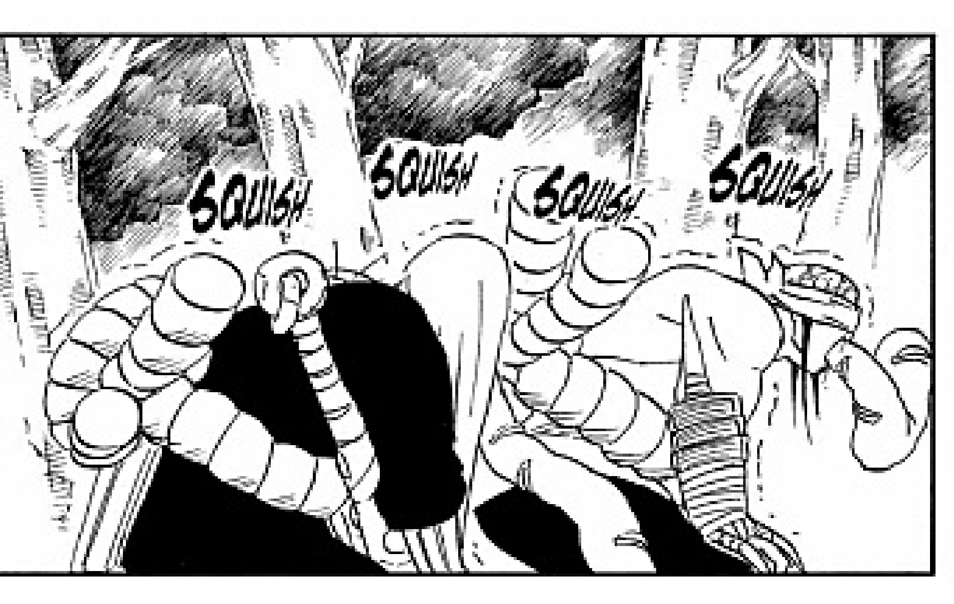



READ THIS WAY


AND YOUR LEFT MIDDLE FINGER AND PINKY. WITH THE MELODY THOSE FINGERS PLAY...
...THE GUY IN THE MIDDLE BENDS FORWARD.


WHILE YOU WERE BUSY DODGING MY ATTACK AND SEARCHING FOR ME...
...I CAREFULLY EXAMINED THE MOVEMENTS OF EACH OF YOUR FINGERS AND THOSE THREE...
THAT'S HOW I WAS ABLE TO ANALYZE AND MEMORIZE THEM.


UGH.
SPHF


SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH


IT'S USE-LESS.
THEY'RE BOUND WITH MY SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE.

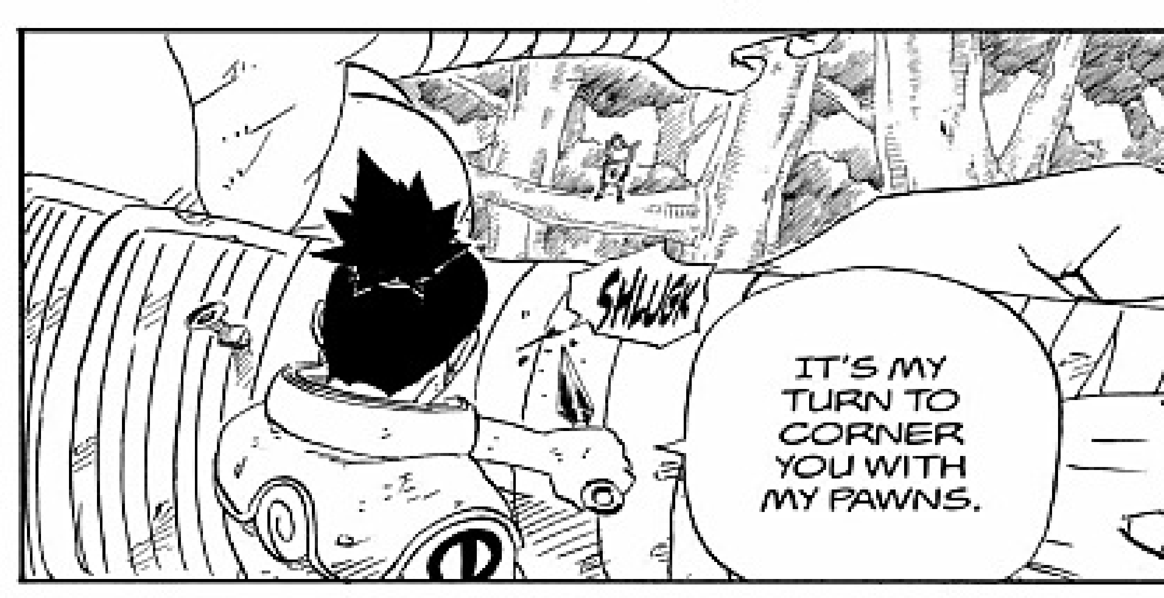

...TSK...

...

SHUF

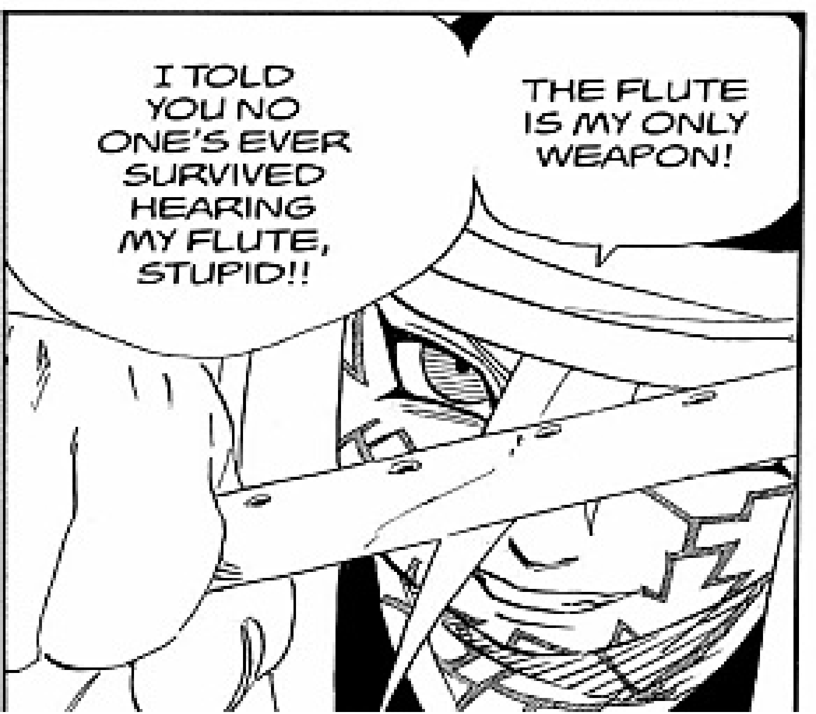
NOW FOR SOME HARD-CORE CHESS.

SNIK











PRETTY CONFIDENT, HUH?

SKF

FOOSH

TAI! DISPEL!!

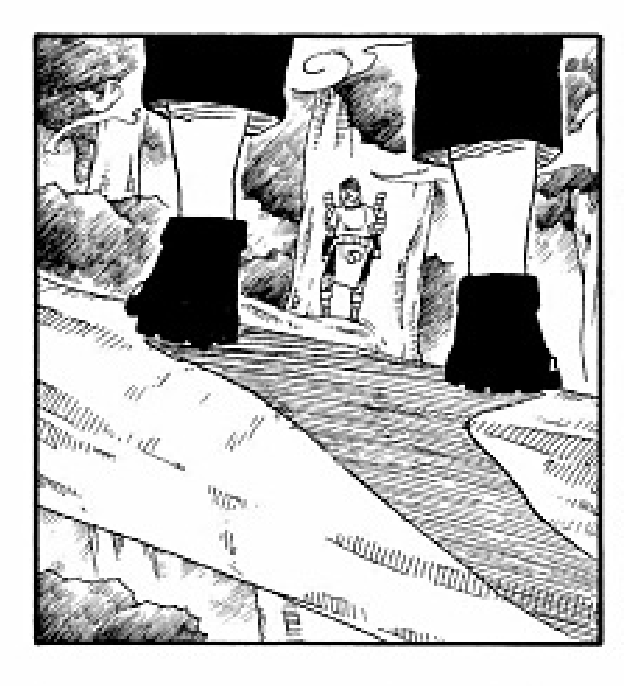

BOOF
BOOF BOOF
TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T GET TO USE YOUR PAWNS!
!
SKREE
NOW, IT'S MY TURN!!
OH...


READ THIS WAY

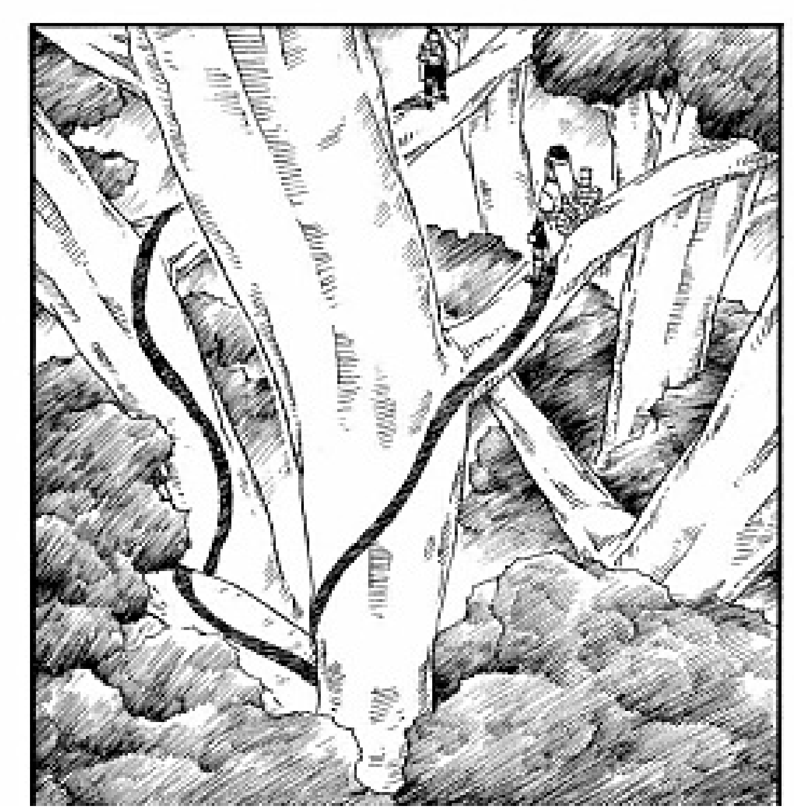

GAH
?!


WHAT ?!


SHADOW POSSES-SION! SUCCESS!!

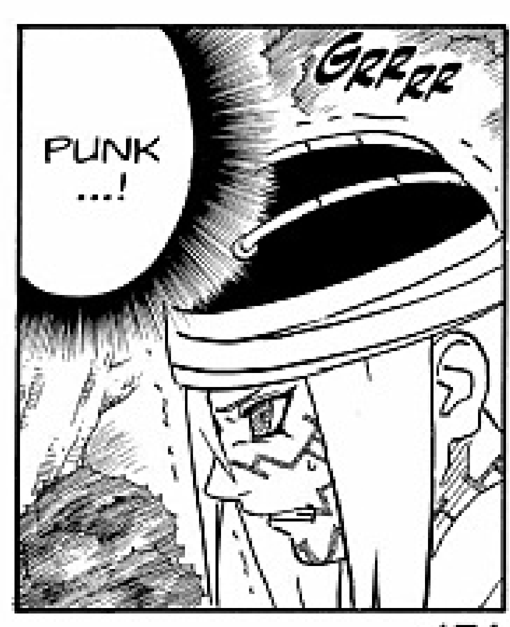




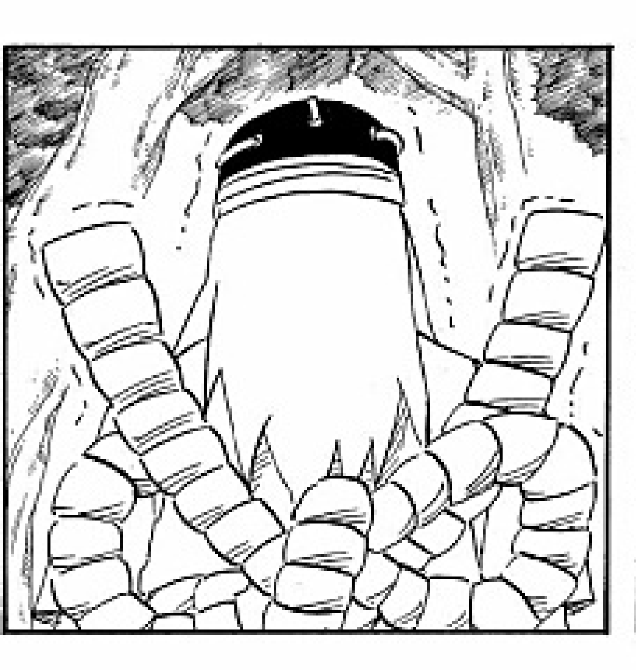


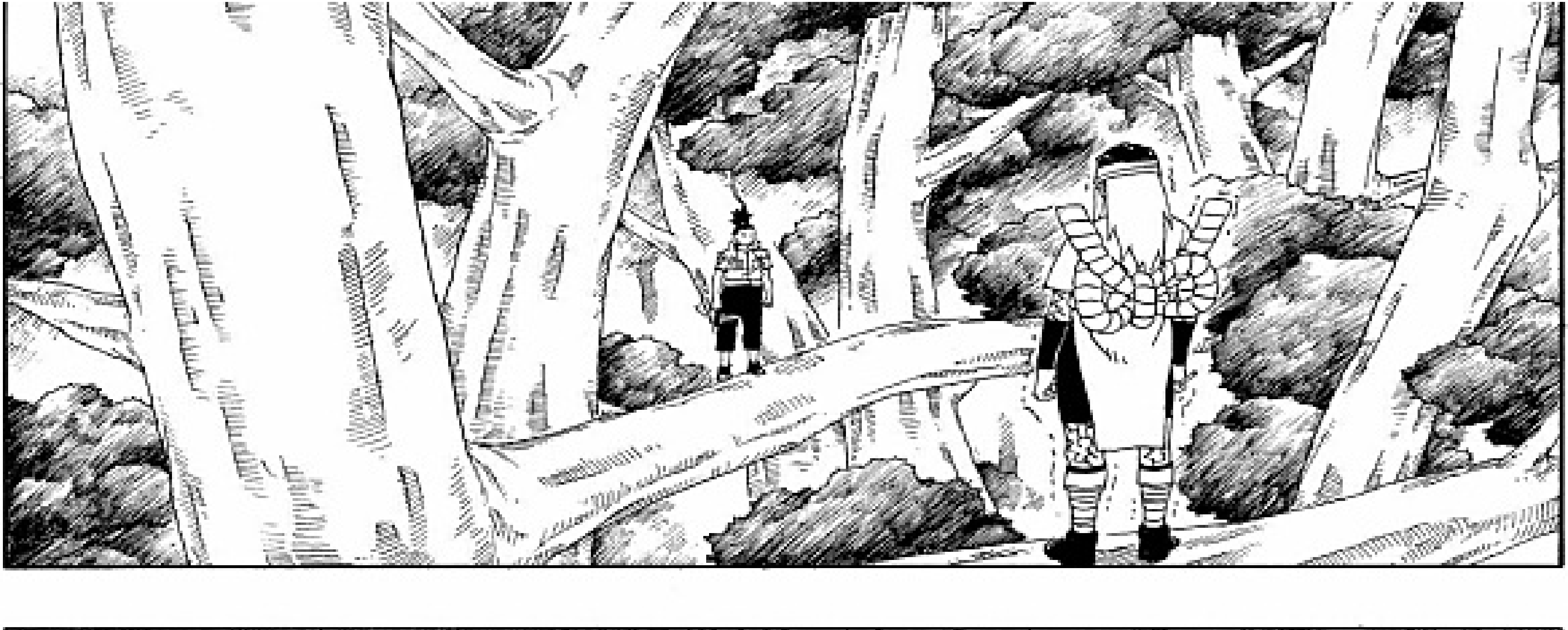
I TOLD YOU I'D CORNER YOU WITH MY PAWNS.
THEY WERE ONLY DECOYS.

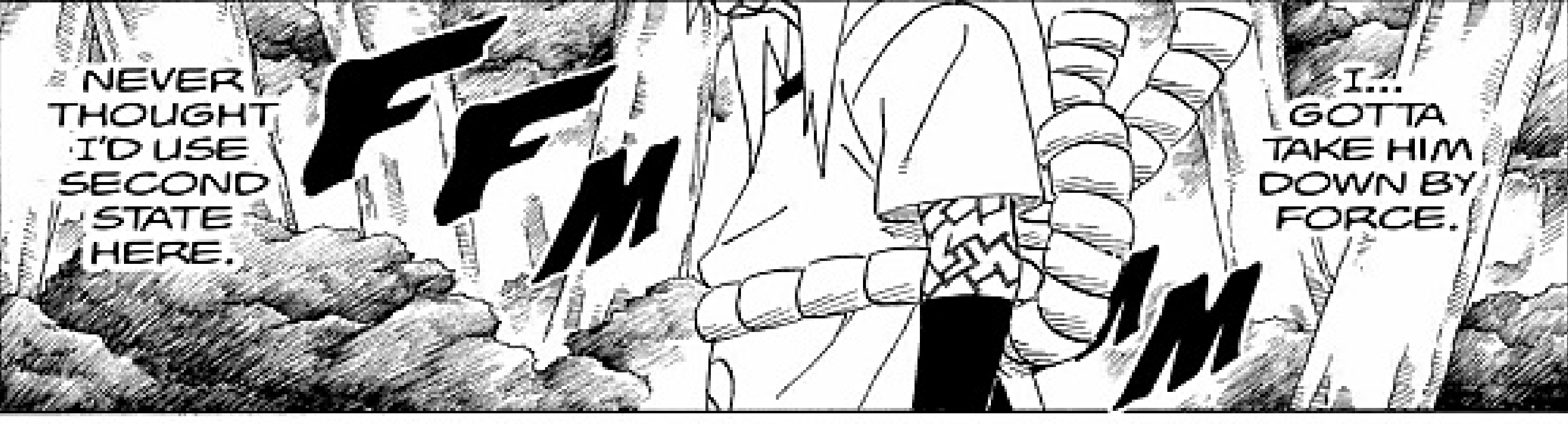










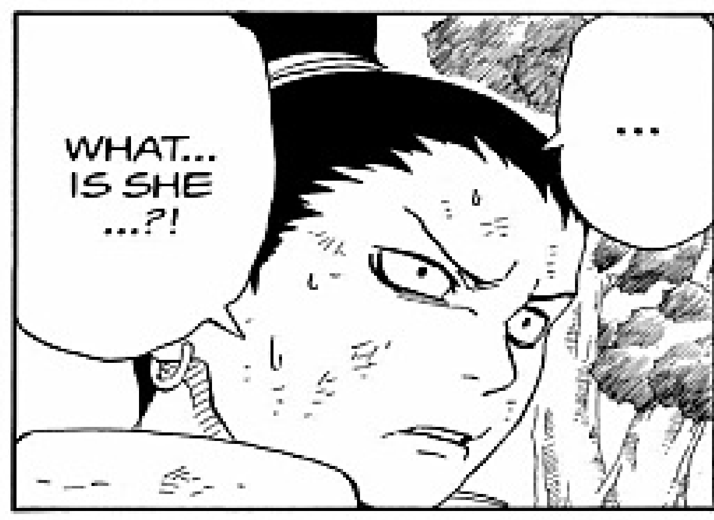

I... GOTTA TAKE HIM DOWN BY FORCE.
FFM
NEVER THOUGHT I'D USE SECOND STATE HERE.
MM


FF
MM

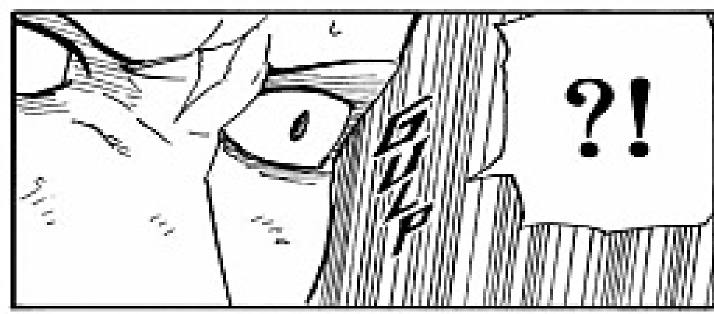

I HATE TO ADMIT IT... BUT I GOTTA HAND IT TO HIM...
FUMP
...THIS LITTLE PUNK IS GOOD.

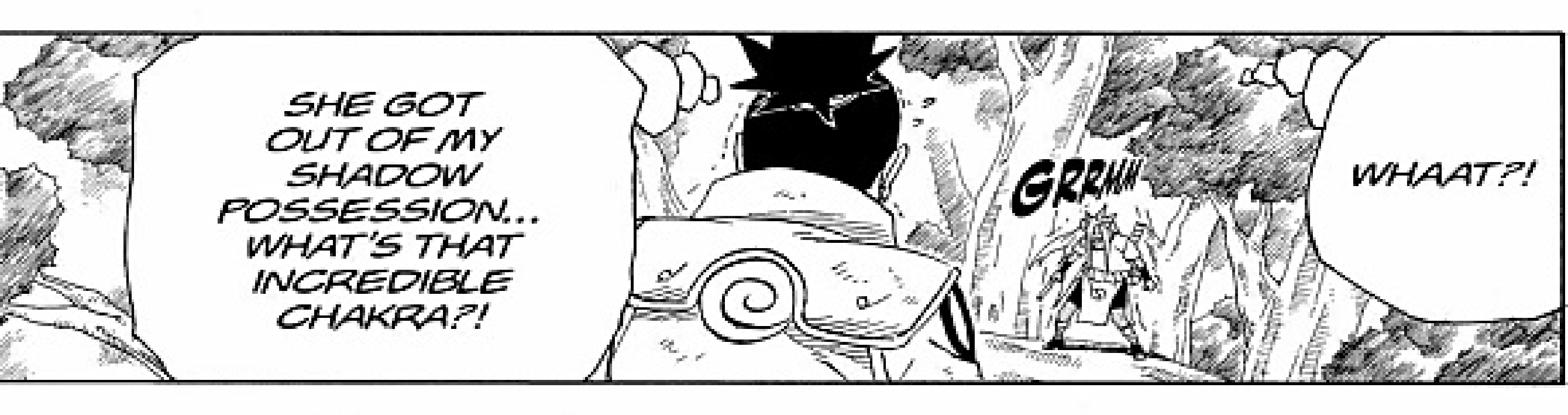

SHOOOO

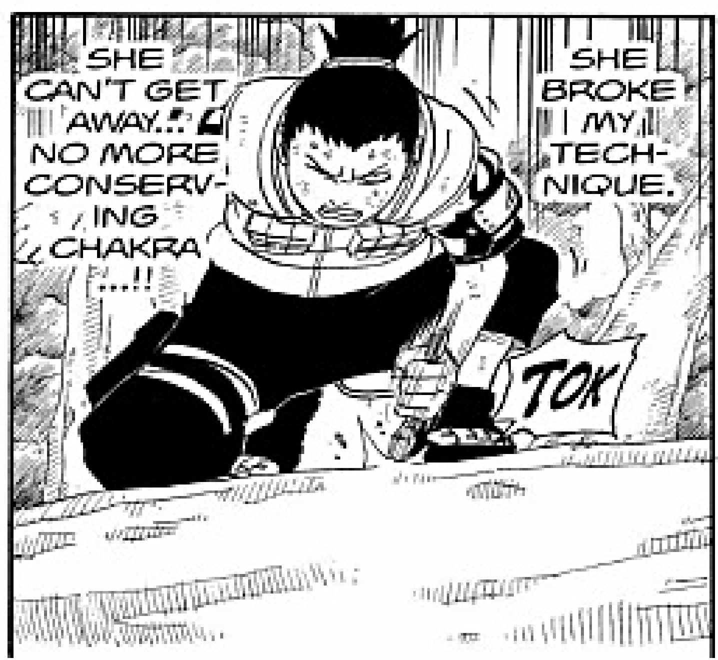

READ THIS WAY

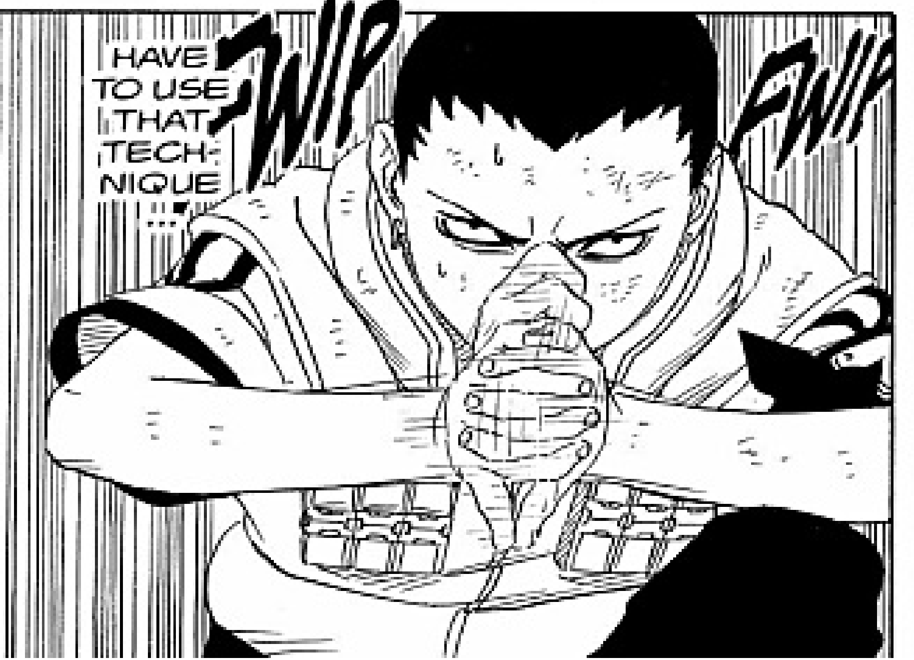

...
WHAT... IS SHE ...?!

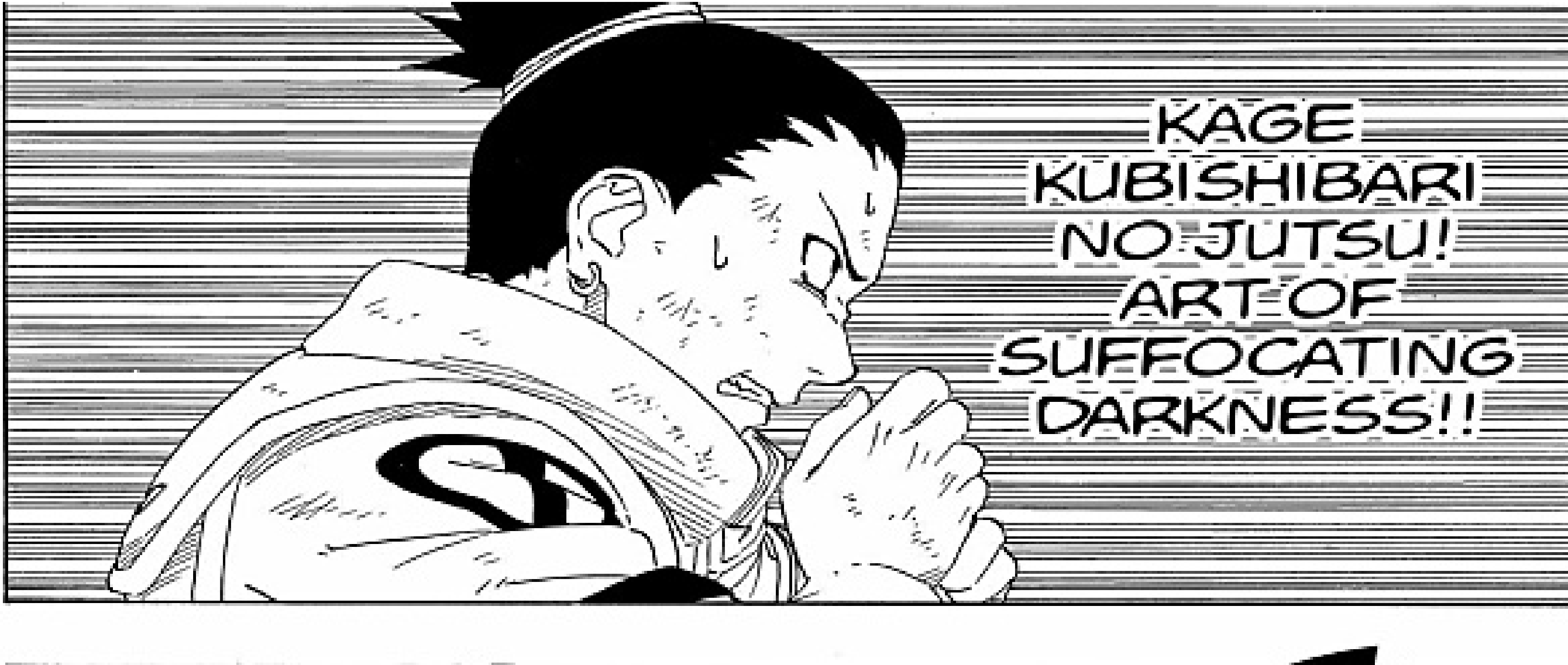

YOU'RE SMART, BUT...
FROM HERE ON, THINGS WILL NOT GO ACCORDING TO YOUR PLAN!
SHIVER
TWITCH
TWITCH


?!

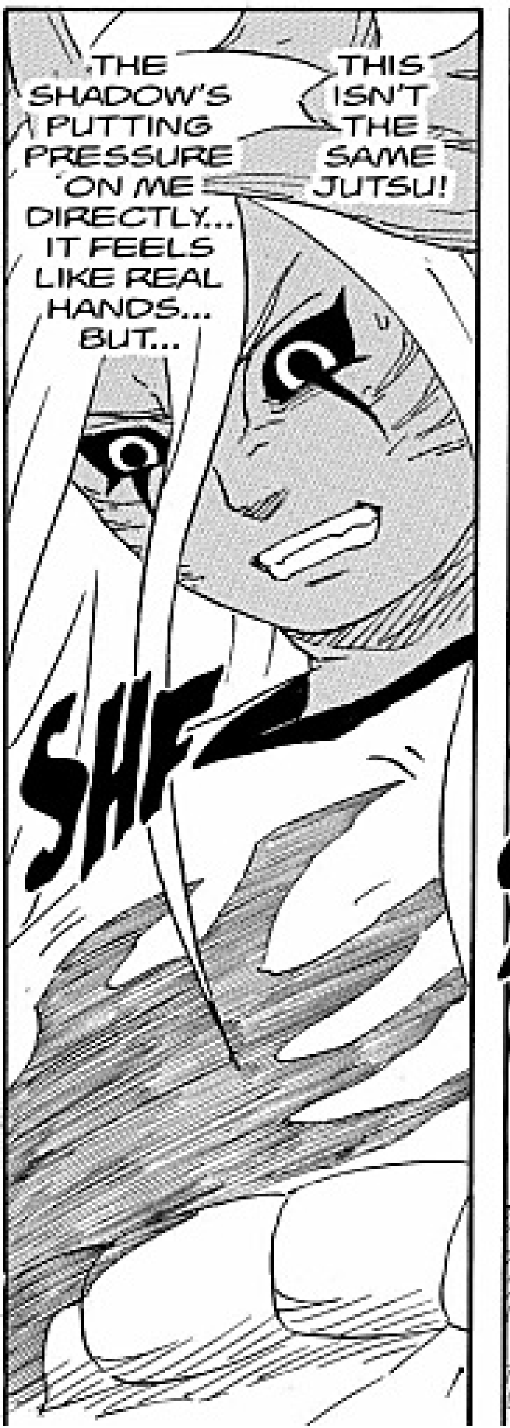

WHAAT?!
SHE GOT OUT OF MY SHADOW POSSESSION... WHAT'S THAT INCREDIBLE CHAKRA?!


SHE BROKE MY TECHNIQUE.
SHE CAN'T GET AWAY...!! NO MORE CONSERVING CHAKRA...!!
TOK

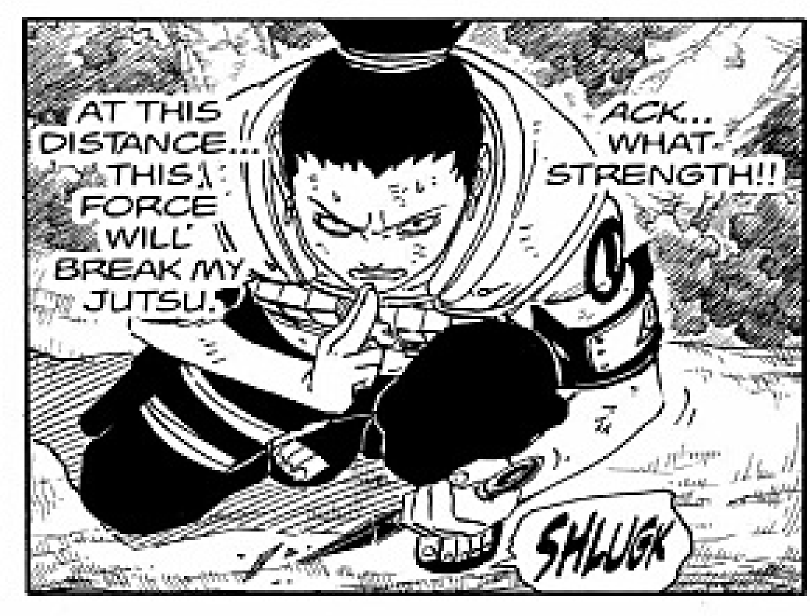

FWIP
HAVE TO USE THAT TECHNIQUE...!


KAGE KUBISHIBARI NO JUTSU! ART OF SUFFOCATING DARKNESS!!

?!!
SHOOOO
GRRR


THIS ISN'T THE SAME JUTSU!
THE SHADOW'S PUTTING PRESSURE ON ME DIRECTLY... IT FEELS LIKE REAL HANDS... BUT...
SHF


READ THIS WAY


ACK... WHAT STRENGTH!!
AT THIS DISTANCE... THIS FORCE WILL BREAK MY JUTSU.
SHLUGK


TAKE THIS...
WHT


MUSICAL GENJUTSU! CHAINS OF FANTASIA!!


!!
WHOA! IS THIS...


GENJUTSU?!


...
GLARE



TWITCH
SHWAP



UGH...
THUNK



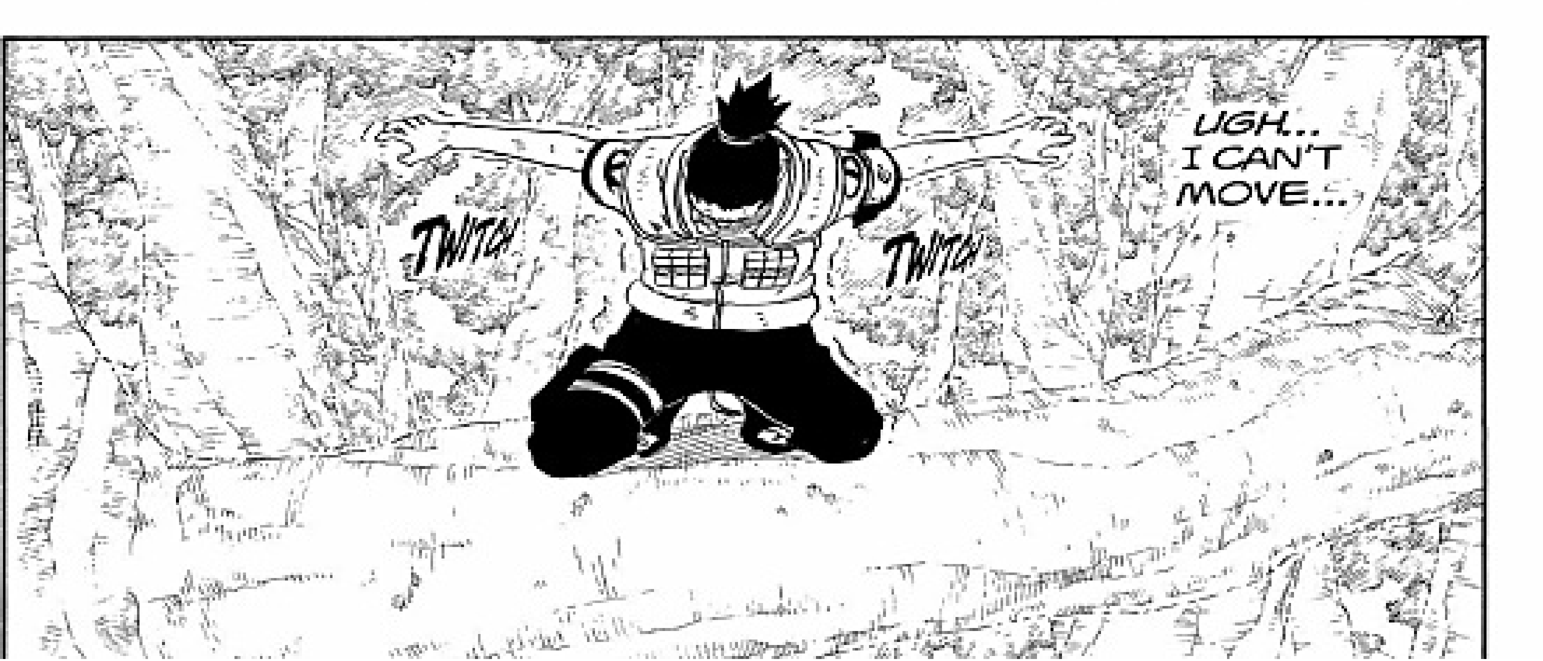
...
TWITCH



HMPH... WHAT'RE YOU AIMING FOR?



SWHOO



TWITCH
TWITCH
UGH... I CAN'T MOVE...



!

?!

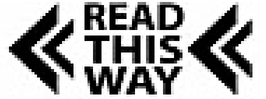
SHLIP

?!!

SHHHHHUP

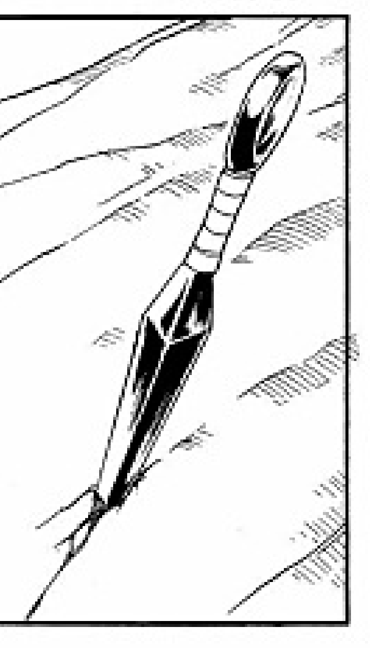

WHOAA-AAAAH ...!!

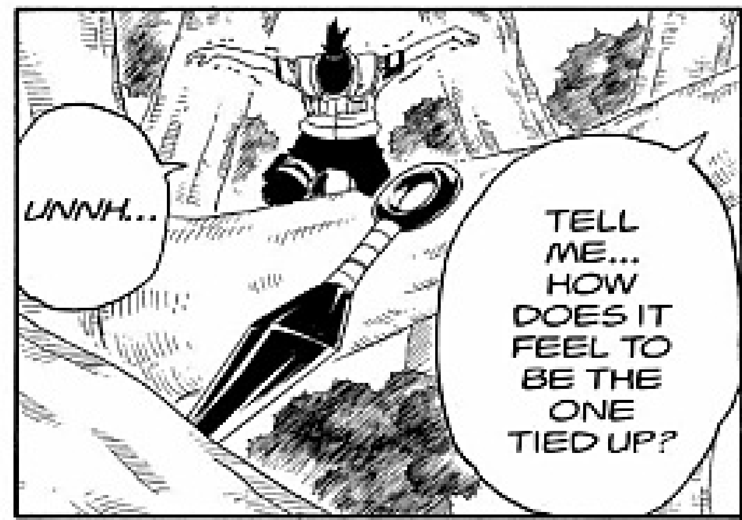

HEH HEH... AS A SECOND STATE I CAN DO ALL SORTS OF MUSICAL GENJUTSU WITH THIS FLUTE...
BUT OF EVERYTHING THIS SUITS THE TWERP BEST...

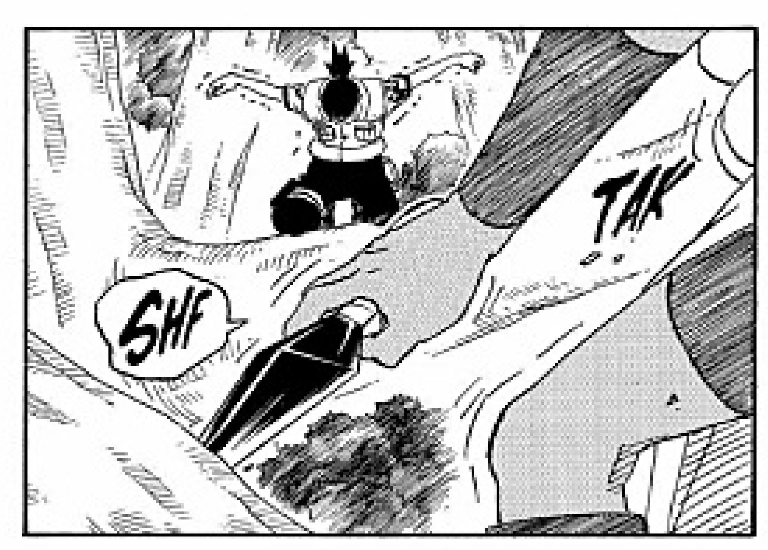

READ
THIS
WAY


GAH... AAUGH!!
THIS GENJUTSU STOPS ITS PREY'S PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS AND BINDS IT!

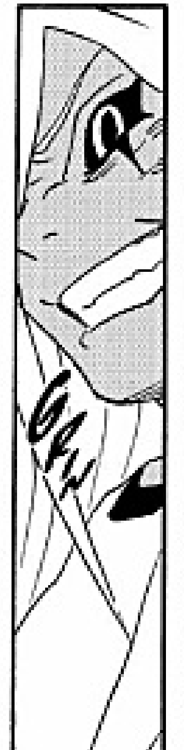

!




TELL ME... HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE ONE TIED UP?
UNNH...

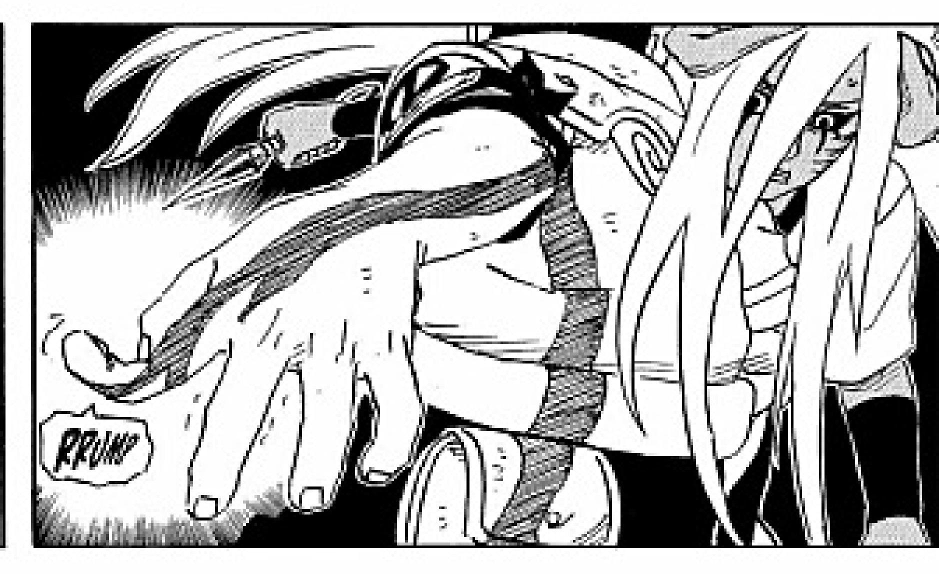

TAK
SHF

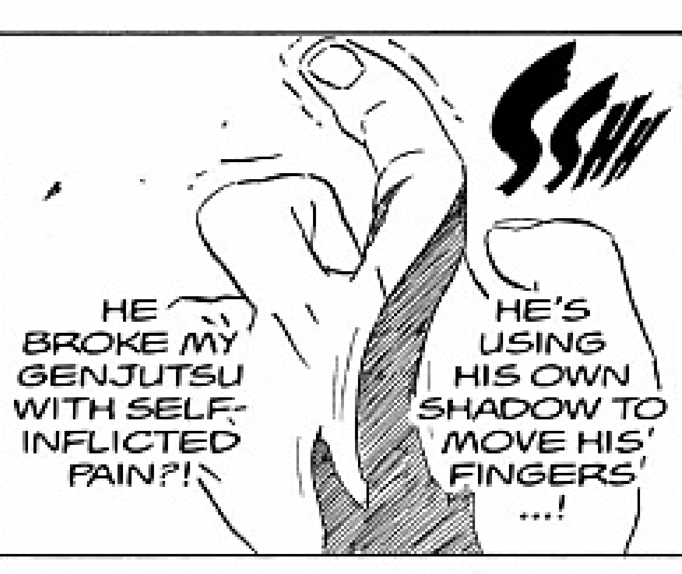

DIE, YOU RAT.
TUMP

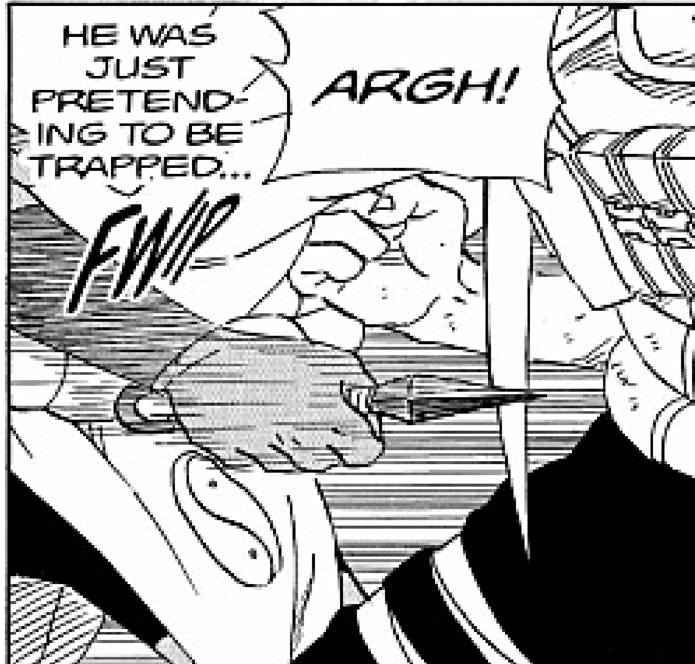



FWUP

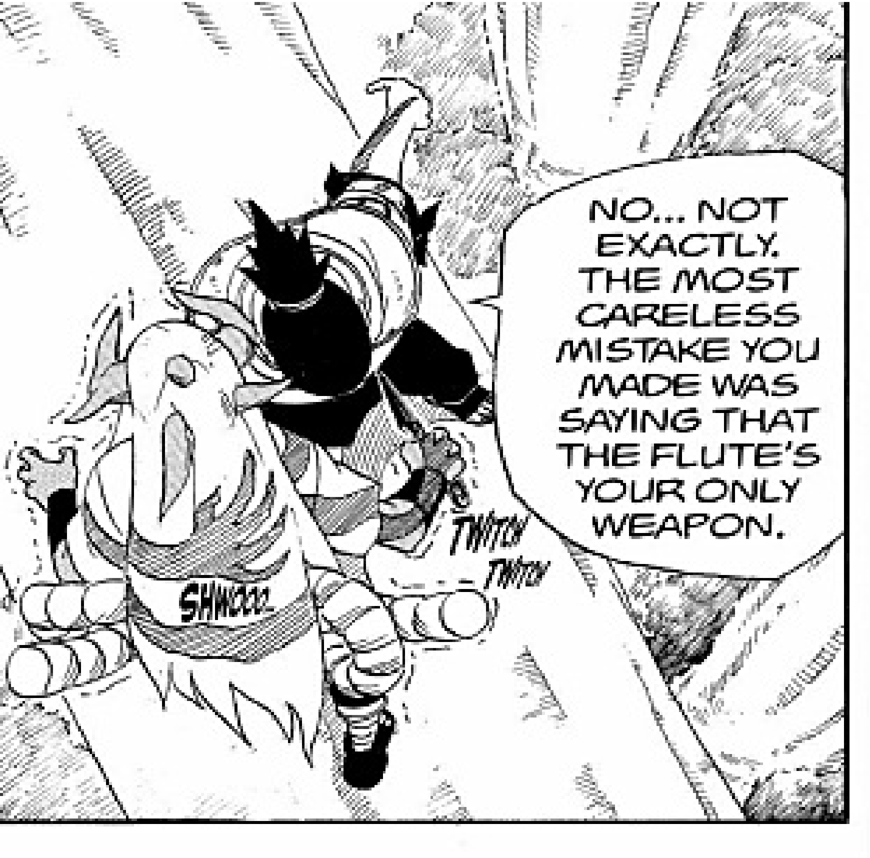
THWAP
?!!
HUH ...?!


RRUMP


SSHH
HE'S USING HIS OWN SHADOW TO MOVE HIS FINGERS ...!
HE BROKE MY GENJUTSU WITH SELF-INFLICTED PAIN?!


ARGH!
HE WAS JUST PRETEND-ING TO BE TRAPPED...
FWIP


TOLD YOU, THE FIRST MOVE IS A FAKE-OUT...
AND THE SECOND MOVE HITS THE TARGET. BASIC STRATEGY, REMEMBER?







...THAT'S RIGHT... I THREW THAT KNIFE DOWN IN FRONT OF ME AS THOUGH I MISSED...

CAN'T BE...!

...JUST SO YOU'D PICK IT UP AND COME AT ME WITH IT...

SCUFF

TO BE CONTINUED IN *NARUTO* VOL. 24!